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THE HEALING PRESENCE

“Words of Love and Life”

BY

RICHARD WHITWELL

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Chichester, England.

Preface

by THE REVD. JOHN MAILLARD

THIS is one of the things I really enjoy. It is true that each day I have enjoyment in the things I do, for never a day passes without something of happiness turning up in the mission of God's healing. But the work in hand is a little different. I feel like a commercial traveller would feel who had something for sale for which the public was waiting.

A public is waiting for a book like the present volume, and more books like it. Speaking as one of the public, I want this book as a man wants a glass of water on a hot summer day—he wants it because it is clean, cleansing, and refreshing. So is this book. Reading it is like having a spiritual bath—your soul comes out all free and invigorated.

No longer can it be said that the day has gone when disciples of Christ enjoyed and were strengthened by the spiritual substance provided by the writings of the Christian mystics. Time was when I never let a day end without a page or two of their writings, no matter what other reading or study may have occupied my evening. And with what result? Healthful, uplifting, calming, sweetening, sanctifying—unfailingly. Such books are at many bedsides once again.

The volume by Mr. Whitwell needs no commendation. Like a picture of outstanding merit and beauty it speaks for itself. Yes, you will find great spiritual beauty and literary merit—a feast for those who appreciate good literature in classic phrasing, and deeply penetrating spiritual revealings.

There is healing in its pages—the breath of heaven—the healing that is needed by all in this age of stress, strain, frayed nerves, mental tension, physical illnesses and weaknesses—the healing which is first inward. And not this only, but how to keep well, the fresh supplies daily, the 'moment by moment' life, the quality of the life inbreathed in thought and prayer and meditation.

This aspect of the daily life, (or is it the whole of it?), how to receive fresh supplies for body, mind, and spirit, is a wide

spread and general inquiry, both within and outside the Christian Churches. The present volume is a sufficient and satisfying answer. 'Feed on Christ in the heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.' The Lord, the Eternal Christ, will not and cannot fail you. 'He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' Feed on His words, His love, His miracles of healing, His goodness—FEED ON HIM DAILY UNTIL COMMUNION IS UNION.

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God's loving purpose, with infinite caringness, is directed towards each one personally and specially; and therefore the words which follow are meant for each to use, and apply them personally in his or her own special way. God would have us, each one, responsive to His action in us and through us, for He seeks to wean us from ourselves, and to lead us out from our narrow little dwelling-houses into an Open Place, where heavenly nature abounds, and where is ever felt a sweet breath blowing from the Hills of God; it is the place of our realisation of His Presence.

I Thy Lamp I would be

THY lamp I would be, to glow with Thy Light: I would be an instrument sensitive to Thy touch, that the music of Thy Word may express in me. For such is Thy purpose, that we reveal Thee one to another. Thy feet I would be to speed in Thy service: Thy hand of healing through which Thy blessing may flow, Thy living touch be felt!

But for such to be it is needful that I dwell with Thee, breathing in Thy Love, as a breath within this breath, within this outward natural breath; it is needful that I put this life of mine into Thy discipline; and that I walk by faith, and not by sight. For faith is our truer seeing. It is our beholding vision. It becomes our gladsome awareness of Thy Presence, very near, and at hand to our need. A turn of the thought brings us there: it is at length as simple as that. For we, in our true being, relate to God's world, and to no other, and we will know no rest until we find it.

The question on the lips of the first disciples, when they saw their Lord, was 'Master, where dwellest thou?' And His answer was 'Come and see!' It was a spiritual question, and the response was a spiritual answer. And we read that they went with Him, and where He led, they followed, until they came to where He dwelt. And we, too, would He lead to that same place, where Love builds her tabernacle, that with Him we may abide, in consciousness of God's nearness, and in realisation of His Presence.

Truly, in Love, all are present; not one is absent. Truly, in Love, each and all are held near, and very dear. . . In the body, or out of the body, in Love, all are very near.

Love speaks, 'Come unto Me, and I will refresh you. I am thy Redeemer. I bring to you emancipation from every ill, deliverance from every bondage.'

'When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;

when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'

Let Love be regnant in your life, and so it shall be. You will experience a definite leading, and a clear guidance; and an unfolding fulfilment of that towards which you have striven.

'I am the fragrance of life,' Love repeats: 'the fragrance which sweetens every relationship. Thoughts come to Me to be purified, actions to be transmuted, experiences to become creative centres. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from every deceit." Be clean in thy sincerity, that I may manifest in thee. "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."'

'I am the flame of truth within; no falsity can come near to where I am. I am that holy altar-flame within the sanctuary of thy heart. Truth and love, the twain are one. Therefore am I also thy hand of healing. I am the kindness in thy heart; I am thy gracious thought.'

'Let me give you of the precious treasure that I hold. I touch you, and I bless you, and I heal you. Be thou now free from every ill. For where I am, there you may be also. Be strong in your truth, in the simplicity of truth. And thus put away from you every manner of prejudice, condemnation, criticism, realising truly that only Love *is*, for that God is Love, and God is All.'

'Therefore Love restore you, bless you, cleanse you in the inward parts. May God be gracious unto you, make His face shine upon you, give you peace.'

'My presence is Peace: entering, I give rest unto your soul. The word of the spirit of your life I interpret; in Me the meaning is found. And in Me will your thought be focalised into power and action. Then it may be, and in time it will be, the pulsing of My spirit will be felt within your thought, within your word!'

'You will be charged with power from on high: power that is fresh and new. Power that is newly creative *now* to express in you! Moment by moment My power pours

forth, ever fresh and new. And ever and always is My creation fresh and new as at the beginning.'

'Yet am I humble and meek: there is none so low but bears with Me an equality; there is none so high but I am his peer! There is no one with whom I will not walk, and gladly, on equal terms: there is no high and no low in My thought. For in all, through all, in each, in every one, I behold the One whom I love, whose beauty is above ten thousand. Come, dear child of God—my brother, my sister—come with Me to where I dwell, come with Me and awaken unto your real nature. Come that I may lead you unto your perfect freedom. And if I make you free, "then shall you be free indeed."'

'Are you then ready for what I demand; to make Me regnant in your life, to give yourself to My direction, to lose yourself, yet in losing to find yourself?'

'That which I am, that which I have, freely and gladly would I impart to you. Blessing, and the strength of love be yours unto the innermost. Come, hand in hand with Me; come, let us enter into God's sweet fellowship!'

2 When the House is ready

'WHEN the house is ready, the Guest is at the door.' When you are ready, and heeding my knocking, than will I come in to you, and I will sup with you and you with me . . . As I commune with you, so will your heart be sweet and clean. The mists of illusion will dissolve, and you will stand, clear-seeing, and upon holy ground, with the day-dawn upon your brow.

If I am with you, is not that everything? 'In my presence is fulness of joy.'

Is not this then our great need, that we should find, and enter in to His presence? Apart from it, life is empty; but in that realisation is heaven itself. In one of the great psalms, the word of God speaks 'Seek ye my face,' and the answer springs, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek!' Truly the face of God is the Love of God; also it is the heaven of God.

Turn ye round about, and lo, I *am* with you. And now I touch you: I give you my blessing, and you *are* blest. I make my sign over you. Does not your heart thrill with a strange emotion? No longer are you your own. Go forth now in the power of my healing!

My voice is in the voice of the Spring, my gladness in the song of the birds, my breath in the ambient air, my love in Nature's yielding goodness and beauty, and in the little flower, and in the kindly fruit. Yes, within Nature is still My sanctuary, for man to find. Yet is it closed to him, till first *himself* he find. Nature awaits on tip-toe for the coming of the sons of God.

'Be ye perfect,' said our Lord, 'as your Father in heaven is perfect.' He spoke from out of that heaven of consciousness in which he ever dwelt. He was not looking so much into the future as into the divine present. The imperfect is not the finished product. How can it be other than a mortal changing thing? Therefore, its element is what we call 'time', or, to use a modern word, 'space-time', and so man, in his present state, abides in a 'space-time' consciousness—within a changing world, never at rest. In Him we step if we would emerge from these anguished conditions. The opportunity is always present. 'Now is the accepted time,' is the word of Scripture. The change, then, is not so much one of progress as of transmutation—not a matter of evolutionary growth, as we usually understand that expression, looking towards some time-distant fulfilment; but rather something enacted in the present, the in-coming of a new element, the presence of which makes all the difference. It is the finding of 'that which was lost.' 'Thou hast made us for Thyself,' wrote St. Augustine, 'and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Thee.'

The perfect, which we call 'eternal' has its own element, which is the presence of God, revealed and made manifest in Christ—the wondrous element, to partake of which is our refreshing and renewal. And we hear His word: 'Feed on Me in your hearts'; and this we do in love and faith. And we thus co-operate in a divine process taking place within us. As we dwell in Christ, St. Paul tells us, a new creation is taking place. It is the fulfilment—and fulfilment cannot be until it rests in the perfect—of all that which has gone before. The 'day-spring' of that other world breaks in upon our darkness. We breathe a deeper breath; and it becomes a breathing of that world, a realisation that it is not far off, but present and immediate. And that truly there is but one World, God's world, if we may understand; and within that World, and within us as we dwell in it, the divine gracious power is ever present and pulsing through.

'One there is,' wrote an old Christian father. 'One who is all-present, all-seeing, all-understanding, creating all through Christ, for "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not a thing made," a Fount of all good, a Fount immense and inexhaustible, a River of blessings, Light eternal beaming inexhaustibly, Power irresistible, condescending to our infirmities.' (*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*).

'Behold the mists sunder, and I stand beside you! Listen! In all and through all there speaks the Word, and it is in *you*. The Song of Redemption thrills through the wide universe. Tremendous is the message, wonderful the good news, that God IS, and that Love interprets all.'

Truly then God's presence fills His Universe, and 'in Him we live and move and have our being.' In this realisation is our life indeed.

There is one Spirit, and it is pure; there is no adulteration in the waters of life. The holy Stream pulses at our doors, flowing through channels innumerable everywhere. Come, dear child, bathe in that living Stream! 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and, he that

hath no money, come, now, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!’

There is no moment when we may not say, *now* I may draw near to God, here and now, just where I am, even this very moment, this very place.

How precious is this little moment. In it there is a central door leading to Thy presence. In the midst of the least little thing it is possible to touch the highest, realise the truest, commune with the divinest. Do Thou then draw the compass needle of my heart’s motion ever toward Thee, my life’s true Centre. Direct all that I do; use this life of mine, in Thy pure service!

3 Religion is Adoration

‘RELIGION is adoration,’ said Baron von Hugel: it is our faith-ful, love-ful beholding of His presence. And where God is, there is heaven too, with all that it means to us, for not in one little bit may God and heaven be separate. Faith, let us say, is our beholding vision. We see through our outer vision, but we behold through eyes of faith. Outwardly we see as through a glass darkly, but with our beholding vision we look into the perfect. Then will the ‘Sun of Righteousness’ arise, with healing, as day-dawn in our souls, which, touching us with its warm rays, will, as St. Chrysostom wrote, ‘leave nothing frozen, nothing hard, nothing unfruitful. It will bring out all things ripe, all things sweet, all things abounding with great delight.’ And the warmth of that radiance is our love one for another.

Surely God is in the midst, and we may behold His glory. Arms of love reach out from everywhere, Angel presences are all around. They flash through the souls of little children; their light is in their eyes. As we meet in

friendship, an angel-presence is there, cementing it in heaven. Love is in our midst, a well of life, a fountain of sweetness and joy. Open these eyes of ours that we may truly see, and not be led away by appearances. And that which we behold in vision, let us carry out in fellowship one with another!

The City of God is in our midst, our place of instant refuge. For 'there is a River, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. For God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be shaken. God shall help her, and that right early.'

'He is our Sun of Righteousness, our shadow in the heat, the Shower on our parched ground, the Bow in the cloud,' wrote Dr. Pusey. 'In Him are we washed, in Him clothed; He is our Robe of Righteousness and Immortality; He is our Home and our sure Abiding-place. All things in this earth may speak of Him, for we dwell in a redeemed world which His sacred Footsteps have trod and sanctified; and it, too, we may think, shall not utterly cease to be, but be changed, purified by Fire into a new earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness; when the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.'

Beautiful is the Life over all, in loveliness expressing. Let us stand still, self-forgetful; let our eyes open with child-like vision, to behold 'the mystic heaven and earth . . . plain as the sea and sky.' Do you not feel the spaciousness of life, hear a heavenly music, breathe a sweet breath in which is no tiredness? From your heart all tension slips away, and you arise fresh and buoyant. Fear passes for Love has laved your eyes.

We know that all is well, because of that hidden Reality, without which nought could ever be. From there our true life is fed at its roots. The reality is divine. There is no life save the God-life: all else is similitude. Our true life beats in response to the Divine heart-beat. The touch of that Reality is our great restorative; it is what the

nations need. It quickens that living pulse, for it is our soul's awakening.

'One Real Life pervades the whole human race, and is pressing forth to fuller recognition and manifestation. We are not really separate, independent units, but members one of another,' wrote a beloved teacher. Let us then devote ourselves, with all our heart, to 'work together with the One Love-Life for its peaceful, harmonious, gladsome and perfect realisation everywhere.'

'As by wireless telegraphy, this wave of truth and universal benevolence will reach those souls who are ready to receive it. Even though it may not be directly recorded in their brain-consciousness, it will none the less be received by them in the sub-conscious deeps. And it will roll back with fresh power to everyone who helps in generating it.'

For 'thought is subtler and more penetrating than electricity. It is of the nature of thought, even when unuttered, to pass beyond the personality of the thinker, and do work in regions beyond. The universe is essentially spiritual.'

Truly, then, we are not separate one from another, as once we may have imagined. Truth relates to Truth, and love to Love; they are as rays emanating from the one great Luminary. They relate, for that they spring from the one great Fountain-Source, to which they return. They are, in the field of our human experience, radiations or emanations of that Love-Wisdom which sweetly and wisely ordereth all things from eternity to eternity. Even so, the true life that is ours, the flesh of which, shall we say, is love itself, has its source and nourishment in the One Life, the great Love-Life that is over all.

For in the One Life we abide: in that Love-Life we 'live and move and have our being.' There is no real life, but it is that Love-Life expressing. It was made flesh, and we beheld, as human eyes may behold. It revealed in one human form divine, who trod this same ground that we tread, yet 'full of grace and truth.' For that Love-Life is revealed in the Face of Christ, and in His Way our way. Life Itself is Love and Truth, and among its attributes are

these: Peace, Freedom, Harmony, Health, Joy. And even so do they reflect in God's children—love, truth, peace, freedom, harmony, health and joy, in beautiful fellowship one with another.

•

4 Heavenly Magic

How many of us feel that the work we are doing is far from being our own. It is generally not something we have chosen of ourselves, but rather something that has been given us to do, or that we have accepted owing to pressure of circumstances. We long for something nearer to our heart's desire. Sometimes we feel wounded because of it, and it may become almost a little crucifixion: it hurts us when we feel that what we are doing, though we may be getting a wage for it, is void of any constructive value. These feelings are not wrong: we may think of them, and not untruly, as a 'divine discontent', an expression true enough when we consider that these feelings are the result of the soul's innate idealism; the frustration of not being able to do that which we long to do.

The Great Compassion is about us, watching, waiting to give us all that our heart desires, and much more. And a Voice speaks, 'Come unto Me, all ye that travail, and I will refresh you.' It is a great promise, not merely for tomorrow, but for today. It tells of a magic which may be released, to fulfil and accomplish what it says, from the moment we are open to its gracious influence. It promises rest and refreshment; it promises the fulfilment of our heart's desire, and even more; more indeed than we can ask or think.

Indeed, there is a magic we may contact which will make all the difference to our life and circumstance, and alter the whole complexion of our work. It is what William Law would have

called the white magic of truth—of Truth itself, and it is so. But the magic is that of the grace of God, in the rich, sweet meaning of that word, if we but realised what it meant, the rich content of that meaning. But how do we make this contact? It is through faith, which, let us hasten to say, is not a mental thing, but rather an attitude or inclination (by which we mean an inclining) of the soul. And faith begins as a little germinal seed, which is this, neither more or less, *the desire of our heart towards God*. But what a promise is implied in that little seed. It is the promise of an unfolding experience, in ways new and true, ever more richly expanding. For it is the beginning of our realising of God's presence, and this will mean everything to us as we journey. It is man's quest of the highest, in which, more and more, truth responds to Truth, and love in our hearts to that greater Love downward bending.

From that moment our true service begins—yes, from that very moment—service for Him. 'His servants shall serve Him,' we read, 'for they shall see His Face, and His name shall be written in their forehead.' From that moment indeed our real service begins, though at first, and for many days, we may be unconscious of it. Yet it is acceptable to Him, as much of our outward service, acclaimed by people, may not be acceptable in His sight. And from its lowly beginnings it will be fruitful, as the latter is not fruitful.

A change of understanding has taken place, and from that moment for us the whole aspect of things becomes different, and our true service or work for His sake begins to penetrate and break through that outward 'bondage-service' in which our lives were held, until it is transformed into a means of grace, and is no longer a hindrance. Henceforth our daily work, whatever it is, will be done in a better way, and as unto another Master, as St. Teresa found amid her pots and pans, and that dear saint of the kitchen, Brother Lawrence, likewise. For worship may rise pure and sweet from the kitchen as well as from the sanctuary. From the carpenter's bench, from behind the counter or within the factory, from the desk of

city clerk or accountant, or even while standing in queues, or in service abroad or at home, amid peace or war, on land or at sea, His servants may serve Him acceptably, no less than from the pulpit or the mission field. Through our self-surrender, wherever we are placed, His work proceeds, and the City of God rises in our midst.

It happens through the magic of the grace of God. The strands that hold us in bondage begin to break away; we breathe a freeing breath, and a spiritual freshness and sweetness is felt, and a deep, sweet peace enters into our soul. Then as we journey, seeking but His will, avenues of richer service will open to our way.

Freedom is not merely to be won by wrestling and travail. There is a simple way—turn but the key of faith, and the door will open. Without effort it may come about; and it will be as if it had always been. To be free, and to stand on our own feet, is not that what we want? Yet is there no freedom until our soul is free! To be free inwardly, what more can we desire? Without it, no true freedom, even outwardly, is possible. ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’

When Love fills and floods our life, then fear departs; there is nought to fear in heaven or earth or under the earth. It passes as a shadow before the coming of light. And Love is Light. ‘There is no fear in Love, for Love casteth out fear.’

5 The Release of Forgiveness

LET perfect forgiveness breathe from our heart, and at that moment there is an influx of Spirit. And our hand clasps the hand of God. For not of ourselves, but only through Him may we truly forgive and bless. Then Love draws near, hand

in hand with Peace and Joy. They come to dwell with us, and to bless us with His blessing. They bear with them a heavenly Manna, that sacred food which Christ imparts, our life's true nourishment, that we may so receive, and receiving be glad.

Every action of forgiveness is in itself a little death and resurrection, wrote William Blake, It is costly, for there is self-surrender in it. Yet it has a cleansing power, for from it we feel the freshening of new life. And we step into a sweeter, kinder, lovelier world. The moment of forgiveness is one of new-found freedom. Our love goes forth to the one forgiven; goodness in return for evil—in the grace of which action our Lord Himself reveals, Christ the *love* of God, Christ the *forgiveness* of God. For it is our realisation of His presence. As we see one another in Him, see one another truly as God sees, there can be no enmity. And when enmity dies, evil begins to haste away.

In Him is all, in Him is all in all. 'He is the Vine,' wrote St. Chrysostom, 'we the branches, He the Bridegroom, we the bride; He the Shepherd, we the sheep; He is the Way, we are they who walk therein. Again, we are the temple, He the Indweller, He the First-Begotten, we the brethren; He the Life, we the living; He the Resurrection, we those who rise again; He the Light, we the enlightened. All these things indicate unity,' he adds, 'and they allow no void interval, not even the smallest.'

God is Health and sweet refreshing, now breathing in thee, child of God, till all thy tiredness passes.

Do you not hear the sweet joyous movement of many waters, 'the streams of which make glad the City of God'? Even now, as through the door of Forgiveness you step into life itself; and begin to touch the real true things, and find them very good! Even now, as you breathe of that living Breath that breathes through all things, even in *you*! And oh, the peace, sweet with forgiveness, bathing you through and through. How sweet the earth under your feet, how holy the ground that you tread! And there is music which in our hearts we hear.

Thou hast opened the door unto freedom; lead me into Thy freedom in deed and in truth. But oh, my deepest, dearest prayer is for the experience and realisation of Thy Love in me—Thy Love which is the media of our perfect relationship one with another.

To love is to be interested in the deepest, truest way of all, in one another; and ever to discern intuitively our brother's inward need. So let us meet all experiences in an ever flowing compassion and forgiveness.

There is ever an approach unto God when our action need neither be hesitant nor hurried. 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' And 'all things are possible to him that believeth.'

Christ is ever present at the point of our perfect relationship one with another. And at that moment heaven opens.

The Love of God in us is a live ray of that Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings.

When I come to the end of this road, quite naturally shall I step into a new way of fresh experiences and realisations. Home do we come at length, where the door stands open with 'welcome'.

St. Paul has a lovely expression, 'The riches of His grace.' And when we think of the grace of God, we think truly of the favour of God: it is the approach and touching of His Presence, made possible through our faith. It is our spiritual sensibility of the loving immanence of His Goodness. And of a surety, we know, in the words of St. Paul, that all things work together for good to the lovers of God. It is through faith that we realise His grace; and then through grace our faith becomes verified in our experience.

Let us then try to believe, not merely that something happened in some special way, for that is not the point, but rather that God loves us, and that God is good. Something, of course, did happen—the most wonderful thing that has ever been—more than man's intellect can grasp—the coming of Christ, the divine evidence of God's love and goodness—

that our Father loves us and cares for us. He wants us to accept His testimony and to live and act accordingly. To believe is to maintain our faith, not merely in fair weather, but against the appearance of things. Let me give a word of affirmation which I have known to be greatly helpful:

'God is Love, His love surrounds me,

In His Love I safely dwell;

It is above, beneath, within me;

God is Love, and all is well.'

But that Love cannot operate in our lives, except we co-operate in our service. He needs our service, and His Spirit pleads with us that we give our lives as channels to His action. While we ourselves stand in the way, in our egoism and self-centredness, God is blotted out to that degree. And we are losers, even to the measure of that influence which may go forth expandingly as we yield ourselves in His love and service.

6 His Servants shall Serve Him

'GOD, Who ordained the services of angels and men in a wonderful order,' wrote Mr. Hickson, 'needs our service as well as theirs. Christ needs His Body, the Church, a lamp for His shining, a heart for His loving, feet for His going, hands for His healing, lips for His speaking, a holy temple for His Indwelling. There will indeed be joy in heaven when we fulfil this trust. Then angels and men will be working together, all looking to Christ, the Healer, receiving from Him, and ministering to the sick.'

And this he wrote in a similar manner: 'Jesus wants to heal the sick. He wants every member of His Body to be like

Himself. He wants us to have a clean, pure soul in a clean and sound body. That is God's ideal, towards which He is ceaselessly working: He wants us to be perfect, and to have perfect soundness. But we make it difficult for God to do His healing work in us because we have not the vision or the faith. Have you ever thought what it must cost our Lord to see any child of His going away unhealed? How it must hurt Him, when He has the power and the love to heal, and yet we cannot receive it.' Yet 'He deals so gently with us. In His love and pity He comes to us, saying "give Me what you have. Give Me your little faith, and I will add Mine to it and it will be a great faith."'

But, he adds, 'Do not think of yourselves: pray for one another. . . With no place in your heart for others, you will not get the full blessing. Let Him have His way with you that He may reach others through you: so there will be a circulation of the love of God through us all.'

The circulation of the love of God in our lives and on this earth of ours will lift our world heavenwards. Is it not what we pray for day by day, when we say, 'Let Thy kingdom come, let Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth,' meaning at once in our own lives and affairs, and in our human society and among the nations? The healing of the body is not our greatest need; it is incident to this, and not the other way about. It is as it were the first fruit of the coming of His love. But it is the coming of His Love that is all-important, and it is on this that we should set the desire of our hearts. Do we not want it to break through as a very tidal wave?

Oh, let this come about, and all the rest will follow. 'These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' These signs shall follow them that believe! Believe what? The witness of Christ the conqueror of evil, that God is Love, and that Love is omnipotent in heaven and earth. To believe is not merely to accept what we believe as a fact, but to act upon it as if

it were, yet not merely as if it were, but in utter certitude that it *is* true. We do not believe truly if our heart's loyalty does not follow on.

When we so believe we open the door to the coming of Love, which in its motion and circulation breaks through those inhibitions and adhesions and the like, which tend to lock our bodies up, or hold our bodies in prison. But Love comes to set the captives free, to open the eyes of the blind, unseal the deafness of our ears, and to preach (that is, proclaim in its very manifestation) the gospel of good tidings to the poor (and by the poor is meant all who are in need, and who feel their need). And the word which it speaks comes throbbing into our hearts: '*now* are ye the children of God!'

He would imprint His likeness in us afresh. 'Faith and the grace of the Spirit,' wrote Chrysostom, 'removing the inequality caused by worldly things, hath moulded all to one fashion, and stamped them with one impress—the King's.'

'The coming of the Holy Spirit is gentle, and fragrant; beams of light and knowledge gleam before His coming. He comes to save, to heal, to teach, to strengthen, to enlighten the mind of him who receives, and then of others through him. He who receives of the Holy Spirit is illumined in his soul and sees things beyond man's sight which he knew not; his body is on earth, but heaven mirrors in his soul.'

'Christ is made our very Head,' adds St. Chrysostom. 'Angels reverence that Head, and archangels, and all those powers above . . . Look, I entreat; a royal table is set before you; angels minister at that table; the King himself is there. Every day He cometh in to see the guests, and converseth with them all.' And in a kindred manner, in our own day, Brother James wrote these words: 'Come, let us break the Bread of Life in holy love together. Let us drink of the new wine of joy, the ever young life of our ageless Christ. Let us pass the cup of blessing unto one another. Let us be glad in the gladness of the salvation of God.'

7 Spiritual Responsiveness

As there are degrees in our human love, so there are degrees in our love for God. At its highest there is a self-offering, a self-surrender. And God speaks to us, 'My child, give Me thine heart.' He desires that we love Him with all our heart, that our gift may be complete. 'With all thine heart, with all thy strength, with all thy mind.' For this is needful if we would receive all that which He would give. There is, indeed, growth in love, our 'growth in grace,' till the soul is open and ready to receive His transcendent gift, that of Himself, for God gives of Himself in His greatest gift.

We who choose God 'are chosen of Him ere time began,' wrote Dr. Saphir. 'We feel that the two Arms with which the Father embraces us with never-changing love and safety are Christ the Saviour, and the Spirit. God's will is now done on earth. Omnipotent love and wisdom are now influencing us, and that not merely from without but from within. The Spirit of God is now within us, in depths which we cannot fathom, praying in us, enlightening our thoughts, enkindling our affections, moulding our character, directing our will.'

'Before grace works in us, we admire humility, but we do not become humble; we admit that faith is the hand that grasps salvation, but we do not trust. Nay, we are apt to make our hearing without faith, and our approving of the doctrine a substitute for the exercise of faith. When God works in us both to will and to do, we actually become poor in spirit, humble and contrite, trusting in the Saviour, and setting our affections on things above. We know it is the Lord Who works in us; from Him is our fruit found.'

Thus we learn to do God's will, and our hearts are at peace.'

Love is the well of life, the fountain of sweetness and joy; and it will be found so in all human relationships. What we have seen in vision, let us know in truth!

‘I love: I serve. By my service,’ our Lord says, ‘I claim your loyalty: by my love, I claim free entrance into your heart.’

God loves you, and because of His love He cannot leave you alone. He is ever calling you by your name, the *name* by which He knows you. In and through your experience that name is sounding till you at length can hear and answer to it.

“O give me Samuel’s ear,
The open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy word,—
Like him to answer at Thy call,
And to obey Thee first of all.”

‘I offer to you, brother, the bread of compassion; and to you, brother, the bread of humility. Eat ye of it, it is well; for you it is the Bread of Life.’

Our time-experience after all is but an incident, the fleeting mirror of the eternal plan. For is it not meant to be its reflex—His glory passing by—the apparent darkness being necessary for His showing?

The divine world is not removed from us; it is we that are separate from *it*. Christ came to lead us back to where we truly belong, at once inward and upward. ‘The kingdom of heaven is within you,’ He said. We fondly imagine that the outward we know is all that there is. We do not realise the resource of divine goodness which is so near to us, so very near, that we just fail to see it. And we do not understand. Nor, as we are, can we, until His light begins to glow for us, and to suffuse our consciousness. Perhaps it is the failing of that light that renders the body so opaque and material.

But need the body be material and gross or dense? Is there not inherent in it at all stages possibility of increasing sensitive responsiveness to Life and its every true motion, or, shall we say, the alive Universe?

Our body, is it not meant at length to be crystalline and pure, and divinely healthy, even as our mind becomes childlike and open to all divine influences, and therefore sensitive and responsive to the radiations of truth and beams of love streaming from everywhere, infilling our consciousness even as we are attuned to the same? Yet not till then—for it is cut off by reason of the closure in ourselves. It is the radiation of the very atmosphere of those heavenly places we had deemed far-off and beyond our reaching, but which at length we will discover most intimately and closely near. Then, in a true understanding, in wisdom and in love, the soul becomes aware of itself in the world of God.

The saving of our soul is the impress of Christ upon it, till at length only that impress remains. The soul has, then, to become Christed. And to this end the Spirit works, until the falling of the chrysm of His Love. His Name shall 'be written in their forehead.'

God's Universe is One, from centre to circumference; it is not divided, as it would seem to our human blindness. It is over-shadowed and infilled by His own integrating presence, to which He calls us to become attuned, that we may know and realise the wonderful meaning of it all. 'Hear, O Israel, for the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'

There is, writes St. Paul, 'one Body, and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

Behold, then, God, and only God! only God and His goodness filling His universe. We know not what the Father hath in store for His children, as they arise out of separateness and egoism into realisation of the allness of the presence of God.

When I am with you, and with my arms about you, dost thou not thyself forget; art thou not Mine as I am thine? O, how surely that is so; for art Thou not the light in me, Day emerging and revealing through my night?

8 Love's Widening Embrace

THERE is no love apart from God, whether we know it or not. Not love as a sentiment, but love that is true. The deeper we love the more do we find kindredship with all that lives. When love is perfect it is all-embracing. That is why Christ is Saviour. He gathers all humanity to His breast. In Him love reaches to the heart of God. For it is God, the evidence of God in man, which only the integral likeness can achieve. God is Love, and Love, deepest, truest, divinest, is God. Love is the Fount of His Being; and, in Love, according to its degree, His being is expressing, wherever it is manifest.

Love is an over-flowing fountain, the waters of which, life-giving, flow in blessing unto all.

Supreme over death art Thou! Love speaks in me. I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die! O tender Love, place thy hand upon the stricken brow; and with Thy cooling peace lave the tired aching heart.

In the presence of Love, all bitterness, misunderstanding, and disharmony melt away!

God's will, God's purpose in our life, our knowledge of it, our obedience to it; is it not that what we want? Is it not the issue to all our striving: is not its realisation that peace which quells the restless beating of our hearts? Never can we know rest until we find our central Haven.

Thy Purpose I would seek, Thy purpose in this life of mine. Thou knowest what is best for me, as I, of myself can never know. Therefore, not my will, but Thy will be done in me, I pray! Help me to yield my life to Thy direction, and to the influence of Thy pure action.

Wherever mine eyes turn, truly seeing, Thee I behold! And, my heart whispers, 'There am I.' Everywhere I

discern the soul, life seeking, freedom seeking, God seeking. Thou art the urgency within the soul, but also Thou art our haven of Rest: the urge of our seeking, the solace of our finding. In Thee is the very truth of our being; in Thy Being is our life's reality!

'Nothing,' writes J. R. Moseley, 'is more clearly and gloriously His will than for us to enter into Him and abide in Him forever. If we ask anything according to His will, and everything is according to His will that is best for us and all others, He hears us and answers in terms of experience as soon as we are made ready for His answer . . .

'The Spirit knows what we really want, which is God's best for us and His best in relationship to all. He alone can lead us until we are brought to the place where we become one with Him, desiring together, praying together, working together, each of us doing what we like best and can do better and happier than anyone else.'

Truly in loving service our life becomes a ministry, and that is what God would have it be; and, as we truly serve, there is, at the same time, an ascending incense of prayer and praise in the interior courts.

Is our service for God separate from our service one toward another, or to be considered so? No, but in whatever form it takes, all true service is the One Pure Life expressing. Our seeking not our own, in truth and good, in whatever manner it take, is, interiorly, our assimilation of the Life divine, our heavenly food and drink. As I turn in love toward my brother, with hand of blessing, at that same moment there is a turning within me unto God in prayer and praise.

'One soul there is, one Soul alone; one thing that hath immortal substance, one sole power that can produce reality. One soul there is in all the universe that hath a very being, that can say, in truth's simplicity, "I am", "I live". This is the soul of Love. And we are only virtuous and good, and children of the lovely life of God, as we are moved by her, as we are led by her fair wisdom in the joyous path of healthful wisdom, - fragrant, ever young.

There is no ill so deeply rooted in the heart of man she cannot touch, and lo! as from a point of flame the grievous thing is gone.' (*Brother James*).

Christ came to make us aware of the heaven that He knew: the beautiful reality, so present and immediate to His consciousness; the Divine Perfection, so immanently near, if we might but realise! It abides in us within our love-consciousness. Yet not merely so, for it is around us and about us to our true perceiving. Heaven not far off, but near! Unto it at length we come, raised by His Hand. When our eyes open, and we behold, Heaven is all around! Truly it is our beholding vision of truth and good.

I am Thy lamp, but Thou the light. With Thy light illumine me. I am Thy instrument, but Thou hast the melody. Let Thy music pour through me. I am Thy hand, but Thou the healing power. Use Thou this hand in service of Thy love. These lips are Thine, but dumb they are apart from Thee. Speak Thou then Thy word through me.

Thought brings nearness, but Love brings healing nearness. Where Love is present there is an open fountain.

When in God we love, all those whom we love are brought more closely near. Whether in the body or out of the body, they become present and near. And they are blessed. So does God's blessing flow, pulsing through innumerable channels to all that live.

When the embers of Thy love quicken into flame within our heart, and the eye that is in us opens, the eye that is ever single, in a pure beholding into Thy truth and good, how well it is!

The love we hold toward our brother is blessed and quickened and centralised by reason of another love, our love toward God. It is in and through that Love divine and only so, that we have a true beholding of our brother. On the other hand, only as we truly love our fellows can we love God 'in spirit and in truth.' 'If we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?'

9 A Childlike Trust

WE read that when, on one occasion, the disciples were wrangling with one another as to who would be greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus set a little child in the midst. And He said, 'Verily, except ye be so changed as to become like little children, ye shall in no wise enter in. Whosoever therefore shall make himself lowly as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' A little child is very simple and very trustful; so should we be increasingly when we enter into our true and spiritual life. We say, who can resist the faith of a little child? For it implies faith without even one element of doubt. That is the faith to which Christ calls His disciples; belief in the love and goodness of God in which there is not one element of doubt at all. If the Church of God had that, what a mountain-moving power there would be behind it!

'By His Love,' wrote Sister Therese, 'we are supported every moment. God is aching for our utter loving response. Love is repaid by love alone! Bethlehem, Calvary, the Resurrection, they all spell this one word, Love! "If any man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him."'

'O Trinity,' she cries, 'Thou art the Prisoner of my love!'

Such a belief is a door that opens into the very heaven of God. Not a heaven far off, but heaven very close and very near. There is self-surrender in such belief, and through it we step in even to that very heaven of His Presence. One single step in truth may bring us there. It becomes one wonder-look of love. The Presence of God is felt and known. There is no place for self therein. And so it is that in that heaven the soul loses itself in loving self-abandon; loses the false, to find the true; loses the shadow to find the real.

‘Unless thou turn and become as a child, hanging upon Him for all things, thou shalt not see the kingdom of God. This do, and nothing shall hurt thee; for thou shalt be at friendship with all the things that are, as thou dependest upon the Author and Fountain of them, and becomest like Him, by such dependence, and by the union of thy will with His will.’ (*Boehme*).

Then is Love an overflowing Fountain, the waters of which, life-giving, will flow through thee in blessing unto all.

Behold Me, as the curtain of your confusion draws apart. I take your hand, and give you of my blessing—and you *are* blest!

As I touch you, are you not thrilled? Feel you not the power of the eternal passion—that Love, which I am. I touch you, ever so gentle, and thou knowest. Throbs not your heart with strange emotion? Power goes forth from Me, and it enters thee—with ecstasy... Now take My hand, and be not afraid, for I will lead you in the paths of life.

In love's reaction, our heart turns in compassionate longing to bless and serve our fellows. Christ's coming brings God back to the place where He was absent. How great our human need through deprivation of God! How curious that there should be absence of That One whose presence yet is everywhere! One pocket of emptiness there is and only can be, and that is in the heart and mind of man. For in the mystery of things man has control of his own destiny, until he give his heart to God. And in the grace of God, from that very moment, will Love divine begin to lead him out of the mess that he has made. What chains man has rivetted upon himself, what abject slavery! victim as he is of heredity or ancestry, of circumstance and environment; the bondage of the Past laid upon the Present.

We may be absent from God; God is never absent from us. I turn toward my brethren, and I behold God there; not absent, but present. And as I look, I wonder, and my heart turns to God in prayer. Everywhere I discern the soul, seeking, seeking, seeking Thee!

For at length there sounds a word in the soul: 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

We open our eyes, and it is Daybreak! We arise and behold, and wonder; and our hearts are made glad. We behold and rejoice in the goodness of God. We awake unto the Present—the *living present*, for there is only one *present* in truth, and that is *God's Present*. And it is all irradiant with His presence.

When thou, little child, freed from passion, heedful at length, dost awaken in joy unto the love of God, and the realisation of His presence; then, for you, no moment will there be more divine than this present moment, no place more truly sacred than this place!

Are you outside of God's Love, or inside? Are you inside of self-love or outside? Now, even with one step may you pass out of self-love, and in to God's Love.

Out of the shadow into the light; out of the unreal into the Real. The very Reality is the Kingdom of God, which is the world indeed as God has fashioned it.

Thy work, beloved, thy best, thy greatest work—God's best work through you—is right at your hand.

The secret of life is this: our turning to God, in childlike simplicity and trust, in all our ways.

10 Our Seeking and Finding

'GOD is found.' wrote William Law, 'as soon as He alone is sought; but to seek God alone is nothing else but the giving up ourselves wholly unto Him. For God is not absent from us in any other respect than as the spirit of our mind is turned from Him, and not left wholly to Him.'

‘The spirit of faith, which not here or there, or now and then, but everywhere and in all things, looks up to God alone, trusts solely in Him, depends absolutely upon Him, expects all from Him, and does all it does for Him, is the utmost perfection of (true) piety in this life. The worship of God in spirit and truth can go no higher. . . And this is that union or oneness with God, in which man was at first created, and to which he is again called, and will be fully restored by God and man being made one in Christ.’

Love speaks: ‘Be freed now from every ill, by allowing Me to enter into your heart. Open then the door to Me, the door that is tight-closed by prejudice, condemnation, unforgiveness. For Love only is in God’s heaven of truth. For God is Love. Let your life be made fresh and new; your inner eye becoming “single”, and your heart sweet and clean.

‘I am your fulfilment, your emancipation from every bondage, your great deliverer. I am the great Healer, for I am Health itself. I am the soothing hand, the kindly gracious word. For I am all compassion. I am the fragrance of life which sweetens every relationship. Through Me all thought is purified, all action transmuted, all experience made creative. I am the willing sacrifice, the hand that gives, and the feet that serve. I am realisation; I am His overflowing bounty. I am a living flame in the inward parts, cleansing with my holy fire; where I touch I make clean.

‘Child of life, dear to Me, let Me bless you in all your being. Come, take My hand outstretched and enter My fellowship. At My table you will find all you can desire. I give you, and how gladly, of Myself—what I am, and what I have. Come with Me; follow where I tread; and fear not, for to you belongeth the Kingdom.

Every moment is a call to faith and love. And it is true, as Fenelon wrote, that ‘as soon as we are with God in faith and love, we are in prayer.’ Prayer then is not a formulation of words; but it is the uplift of our heart in faith and love. The

opportunity is always at hand, if we seek it in little things. It is through the little that the greater is accomplished. And who shall say what is great and what is small? 'Great occasions of serving God present themselves but seldom, but little ones frequently,' wrote St. Francis de Sales, 'do *all* things then in the name of God, and you will do all things well.'

'I love; I serve.' 'By my service,' Love speaks, 'I claim your loyalty; by my love, I claim free entrance in your heart.'

'I pass out of myself to you, beloved! Come, take my hand: in the sweet silence there is understanding deeper than words. All that I do or say is kindled to divine meaning by the truth that burns within.'

'And now the mists sunder, and as you behold, I give you of my blessing, and you *are* blest.'

The service of self-surrender, the service of self-forgetfulness, in that which is nearest at hand: that is all He asks of us. For in itself it contains the greater, yea, even that which is greatest of all. 'As I have washed your feet,' said Jesus to His disciples on one special occasion, 'so ought ye also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do what I have done to you.'

'When thou art by My side, seest thou not more truly, understandest thou not more clearly, feelest thou not more lovingly? When thou art by My side!'

Because God is Love, He cannot leave us alone. He calls us by our true name, the eternal special name by which He knows each one. Amid all our experience that name is sounding, that name spoken by the lips of Love, till we hear and respond and answer to it.

Time after all is but an incident, the fleeting mirror of life, yet framed in shadow. In it we but catch God's glory passing by, yet His Face we cannot see. But are we meant to dwell only as in a mirror, only knowing the reflection of that which is true? Is there not something more, an immediate knowledge of Life more true, more real?

The answer of Christ was, and would still be that this knowledge *is* immediate for us if we will, that the Reality is right at hand and its experience a present possibility. For, He said, The Realm of God or Kingdom of Heaven, is at hand, and it is within you. When we realise our true nature, we will no longer think of ourselves as children of time, but as children of God, and of eternity.

He would have our body become as it were crystalline, when the heart is pure, reflecting the Love of God, and the eye of the soul is single—a heavenly childlike condition, open to all divine influences, knowing the truth divine with immediate receptivity, the soul aware and awake within the realm of God, and responsive to the goodness and the guidance that the present moment brings.

Behold God, God and His Goodness, filling the Universe—He, the One, and the Only—He, Who is Love, nor can be other than Love, from eternity to eternity. We know not what the Father hath in store for His children, as they arise out of separateness and egoism into the knowledge and realisation of God. 'Come ye to the living waters!' is the eternal word to the children of men.

When the presence of God is felt and found, is not our life refreshed as at the break of Day?

II Let us be Glad

LET us be glad because of every good thing; the sun that shines from the heavens down to our earth, showing that all light is from above, gifted to us, and without which we could not live; the stars that illumine the night, the mountains and valleys, the rivers and green fields, the trees and the woodlands,

and the song of the little birds; all flowers and fruits, the fertile earth, its tillage and husbandry, and beauty everywhere. For sea and sky and Nature in all her bounty, let us give praise. And not least because of dear humanity in that which is not yet manifest, amid the throes of its new birth, the anguish and the travail of it—and because of the evidence of the first fruits, the consecrated, the ‘called and chosen’ ones, in whom the divine spirit is awakening in wonder and in love.

If the Beloved is present in me, is not my spirit at rest, my heart greatly satisfied? Is it not well in heaven and on earth?

Conscious in Thee, let my day be radiant in Thy Love. Then in Thy blessing will I bless my fellows more and more.

Be Thou in me vision and light and love. Thou sheddest old joys in me, that my life in Thee be ever fresh and new and young!

Let the gate open, through which I, Thy child, loving and being loved, the clothing of all self-desire cast off, may enter now Thy kingdom.

Except Thou be with me, I lack everything. All that I have is Thine; not one thing that I hold is my own.

God is Love in Whom and in which we truly live and move and have our being. In that realisation will we breathe a new atmosphere, which more and more will become our very own. It is the deep Breath by which we truly live, and truly it is a spiritual breathing.

Our nature being threefold, there is thus a threefold manner of breathing. For the body there is the vital physical breath, and the purer that is, so much the better for us; and so it is with our mental nature, and so it is with our spiritual nature and being.

Our lives will only become as they are meant to be, when the three accord in one. Our spiritual nature is anaemic, it is famishing for its true sustenance, in the absence of that which it needs most of all, the sinless Breath of God in us, the deepest Breath of all, our true and living Breath.

But it is in the midway region, our midway nature that we go astray. It is the region of our self-consciousness, of our

willing, our thinking, with which we may include our feeling—and our acting. We might say that our mental breathing *is* our thinking; and, in especial as we think '*in our heart*'—that is, in that blending of thinking and feeling continually arising from the sub-conscious deeps within, where is the seat of the 'ego', the separate selfhood in man, which decentralises our unit life, so that it is severed and rendered apart from, and thus at enmity with the Whole. The very motion of our separate willing, thinking, acting blinds out our true and spiritual nature. And so our life and being is rendered two-fold, incomplete and inadequate, instead of being three-fold as it is meant to be, reflecting the beauty of the Divine, as it truly unfolds in the 'image and likeness of God.'

Because of that spiritual 'blind-out', man's inner life is an aching and a restlessness, even as St. Augustine inimitably puts it: that 'our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.' While the soul is thus the seat of man's unregeneracy, and of his 'cut-off' life broken away from the harmony and well-being of the Whole, it also equally may be the seat or ground of man's repentance, of his 'turning round' and thinking afresh and truly, for it is true that ever in the deep and hidden part of his being there is a pulse of longing toward the Infinite, in his heart of hearts a far-off dim remembrance as of something that once has been. Something that, perhaps as a child, he knew or seemed to know.

Wordsworth tells us of 'the heavenly light that shines upon our early days, and how trailing clouds of glory do we come from God Who is our home'.

The Prodigal who had left his Father's house at length remembers, coming to himself at last. Sad and troubled and completely disillusioned he determines to arise and return to his Father's house: 'I will arise,' he tells himself, 'and I will go back to my Father.' He does not know for certain how he will be received, but he will confess to his father his shame and his sorrow, and his deep penitence. He may meet with a rebuff, for what else can he expect? But we read of the Father, whose nature and being is love, that when his son was yet a

great way off, He beheld him, as if he had been keeping vigil for his return through all the years of his wanderings. And, seeing him, he ran, hasting with all speed toward him, till coming face to face once more, he enfolded him in his arms and took him to his heart.

‘It is not what will happen a year hence or even five minutes hence that is important. It is this present little instant. On its realisation hinges a whole world of good.’

Quiet in myself let me listen to Thy voice. What I am seeking, may I not find now even this very moment? I may go far to seek Thee, only to return at length to find Thee very near and present all the time.

I do not desire to be any longer my own, but that Love be alive and active in me in tender compassion—yea, even through the surrender of the separate life.

With the coming of Thy presence, all the windows of my soul will fling open to Thy world of Light.

12 A Wonderful Way

WHAT a wonderful way lies before us once we come to realise the presence of God, once the knowledge dawns in our heart that we cannot live apart from Him Who is our very life indeed. And what a wonderful way would open before the Church, were she, as a living Body, in spirit and in truth, to realise the indwelling presence of God, Who is her very life and power and love, apart from which she is dead. Where the intellect rules, there are divisions; where the heart rules there are no divisions. And faith is of the heart.

We pray for the faith of the Church, that it may be clean and true, and simple and trustful as that of a little child. For the Church has to become as a little child, ‘hanging upon God’, as Jacob Boehme would say, in everything; that is, turning to

God in every way, and for her every need. The restoring of such a faith is, we think, the Church's greatest need, for the lack of it is the cause of all the schisms and divisions that have taken place. And it is true to say that in the degree in which the Church is divided, it is ineffectual.

How tragic when we consider the mission with which the Church is entrusted, which is none other than to express and establish God's kingdom of love on this earth of ours. For the Church, as it is meant to be, is itself the nucleus and the revealing of that Kingdom which Christ proclaimed. Its service is not outside of itself, but rather in its own pure expansion and unfolding, in its witnessing and journeying in love and truth, and with the faith of Christ, treading as He trod, in loving compassion, and with open arms of invitation to draw all mankind unto herself. For the words of Christ would then repeat in her pure witness: 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' And it will be even as she walks in that self-surrender of simple faith and love that enables Christ to be all in all. For the Church of Christ, as a dear friend once wrote, 'is the Home of the people.'

But if the Church is, or is to become the 'Body of the Lord' in very truth, it must be healthy in all its members. Every member must then be as a living flame, with heart enkindled in the love of Christ. If we think of ourselves as members of that Church, if His love is not in us, if we are faithless and self-seeking, we contribute to its deadness. The point is this: is *our* witness true, is it loving? Is there, indeed, any one of us but feels, 'I, too, am responsible?'

Let us offer our all in daily sacrifice, putting all in Thy hands, to be used by Thee in service and in blessing. Oh! let Thy love-stream pour in its plenty through our being. Cleanse Thou our lives through and through.

Yet how can we be wholly clean, except through the incoming of Thy pure life?

Lave mine eyes in Thy pure love; lave mine heart within Thy Calvary. Oh! I would have my life a lamp

through which may shine Thy Light, that love-radiance divine—I in Thee, Thou in me, no longer two but one. I alive in my real being, knowing only Thy Life in me.

Let all my powers, in aspiration meet in one point, in one aim—in God, in Whom is my life, indeed, and my service, and my sacrifice.

Prayerfully we wait Thy fuller utterance from within.

In every utterance, in every expression of my life, let me give of myself greatly, in love, in service. Thou, working with willing material, use all unto Thy service—joy, love, and strength imparting.

When I think of another, may Love flow out in blessing through that thought; when I look upon another, may Thy blessing penetrate through that look.

Let the time now come that my life may be a pure vehicle of Thy Love, giving forth of its own virtue without ceasing. There is no virtue apart from Thee. Without Thy inner content is my life but an empty shell. Apart from Thee I can do nothing.

Let all self-willing and self-thinking drop from me, all self-desire that occupies the mind, and dulls the hearing, that I may dwell ever within the blessing of Thy Presence, in self-forgetful service, ever richer becoming.

No desire have I to be any longer my own, but only that Love be active and alive in me in tender compassion—yea, through the surrender of the separate life.

All that I have is to be given, and gladly given, for it is to Thy use. I know that hidden resources will reveal and outflow in and through my life even as I give and give and give.

Of the true and living Church, St. Peter tells us that it is built of living stones; and that its every member is a living stone. It means that he or she is alive in Christ, and that Christ is born in them. In St. Paul's words, they are no longer their own. And again he said, Sanctify the Lord in your body and in your spirit. And once again, the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. St. Paul was not speaking merely to the

Church as a body, but to each member as individuals. In other words, we must each one be as God's church if we would build up the greater Church. So much depends upon the individual, and that Christ be born in our hearts.

The Church is not an organisation, but a living organism of expanding unity in Him until the whole world is at length gathered into her embrace.

Oh! these divisions which tear the Lord's Body in pieces, and for which we are all in a manner responsible. We remember how St. Paul, as we read his words, cried out against such in the Church's early days. Ye say ye are for Paul, or for Apollos, or for Cephas? But what is Paul, and what is Apollos, and what is Cephas? Are ye not one in Christ?

What is Anglican, what is Presbyterian, what is Baptist or Methodist or Salvationist? Are ye not one in Christ?

This is the reason why many who love the Lord's Body in its wholeness find it difficult to identify themselves with any division, or any particular part to the exclusion of the others, though they would worship devotedly with each and all.

When the true and living Church at length arises in its integrity, casting aside impatiently the separative theologies—glowing and indeed on fire with the presence of Christ within—what a commanding influence for good it will at once exert on every nation and on every people.

13 Our Two-fold Service

GOD asks from us a two-fold service. Only so can we live a fully rounded spiritual life. One is in our faithful loving approach to God, and the other is in our true and loving service toward our fellows. We cannot truly love God except we love our brother also. Christ, the loving Shepherd, goes out to find the sheep that is lost, and He will not cease His

seeking and His searching, however costly it may be, until He find it. This is the urgency of the Spirit of Christ in the heart of man, and in His Church—that is, the true and living Church, which is the vehicle of His Love and even (ah, that it might but be!) of His Presence.

Our outward service should not be separate from our devotional life, but rather part and parcel of it, and in a very real manner its outward expression. Failing this, a continuous round of outward activity, however earnest and well-meaning it may be, must speedily lose its worthwhileness. It becomes barren. There are those—and among them, a good many parsons, too—consumed with the desire to serve their fellows, have gone, to use a common present-day expression ‘all out’ in that way, and to such a degree that they have lost touch with the spiritual verities, and they have ended disappointed, disillusioned, and quite worn out. They are so busy in their round of activities that they have no time to fulfil the ‘Mary’ part of their spiritual life (‘Mary’ who sat at the feet of Jesus); to pause a moment to contemplate, to ‘look upward’ and to ‘wait upon God.’

To turn inwardly to God is to draw near to the Source of power, and to be, as we might put it, ‘recharged’ and uplifted with strength from on high. ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.’ The more truly we are able to do this, the more enriched will our life become. It is a sacred experience individual to every soul. And how needful to our true well-being! Needful, too, for our spiritual refreshing, and outward refreshing also! And does not God desire to infill our life and being with His presence? ‘Come unto Me’ is the divine call down the ages.

There are degrees in our approach toward God, and each has its own blessedness. Our journeying is inward in a very real sense, though in one manner it is, as it were, outward, inasmuch as the soul must wean and separate itself from its own egoism and selfhood. It is an upward progress, a climbing

of the heights—with periods of heavenly rest and refreshing for the strengthening of the spirit—till the summit is reached, where an ineffable experience awaits the questing soul. For it is the hill of the Lord, and it is a spiritual journeying.

‘Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart!’ Thus man must make himself ready to receive the blessing of the Lord. And according as we are ready, so will we receive even until the door open (to alter our metaphor) to the deepest experience within—which is no other than a Divine incoming and the entry of a heavenly Guest, who comes to stay, and make his abode with us. ‘When the house is ready,’ Brother James tells us, ‘the Guest is at the door.’ And this is true for everyone. Of such an experience let me give it in the beautiful words of Brother James, who had sought and found, and was a changed man because of that finding.

‘Great quiet reigns within, and silence only is; in the deep still unfathomed calm the voice of thought is hushed. No sound of any word ariseth from the mind; the house is ready, and I know the Guest is at the door.

‘Sweet as the gentle dawn that blushes o’er the hills, so sweetly steals there o’er my soul the Holy Influence. Soft as the western breeze that bloweth o’er the sea, so softly breathes there o’er my mind the breath of holy love. The tissue of the soul, the body sentient, is kissed and blessed and made alive by the upwelling Power. And the whole body glows with the celestial warmth; and every nerve now sings the song of the indwelling Love. And every cell is blessed, and quickened is my frame; and toned and nourished is the form that walks upon the earth.

‘Sweet, sweet, O how sweet, thought nor sound nor flesh can say: it is God and God alone in the heaven of thy soul. It is the coming of the One, the indwelling, the upwelling of the Holy, Holy Love, blessing, blessing evermore.’

And again he writes, out of his own deep experience: 'Thou art our life indeed; Thou art the bread of heaven; on Thee alone we feed.' For 'Thou art fuller and sweeter the more deeply we drink of Thee, and Thy fulness only waiteth on our capacity.'

What we all long for and desire more than anything else, though we may not be able to express it in words, is the coming of the Love of God, which Brother James expresses as 'the Great Love,' into our lives and hearts, at length fully to dwell therein. For it is God's answer to the deep prayer or cry of the human heart, the Divine solace to its restless agitation which will never be stilled until It come.

At Thy touch our narrow limits break away, and light streams in where was darkness before, music where there was sighing, joy and love where anguish had been.

The will of God for me at this hour is my willing acceptance of the conditions of this hour, and a rendering of perfect service in the same, making a rich self-offering in the little thing as in the greater.

There is no inevitable. There is always a better possible through our human action.

Would we change our place in life for a better? Then let us fulfil the duty at our hand.

14 Our Greatest Need

WHAT we need today in the Church beyond everything else, is a new fresh baptism of the Spirit—and in a manner befitting these times in which we live—and with a deeper realisation of the presence of God. And then, from the Church, as from a living Fountain, the spreading of that Influence in streams of regenerative power through this land of ours; and from this

land spreading with blessing into every land! We do not mean that kind of revival which sometimes happens as a result of perfervid evangelism, the outcome of which so often is disappointing. What we would like to see is a very renaissance of the Spirit, our hearts and minds awakening to the sense of the immediacy of the divine and heavenly realities.

It will be a living breath, coming fresh and sweet from the hills of God, breathing into the spirit of man centrally. It will be inwardly refreshing, yet not merely inwardly, but outwardly also—refreshing and healing. And should not that ever be so? It will not be so much a quickening of spiritual fervour and aspiration toward a heavenly and perfect Realm beyond this present world, as it will be a deepening and enriching of our present life, transforming and fashioning it into the pattern of the heavenly. In other words, heaven itself will flow into our human relationships.

It is that same living stream which is pictured as 'flowing out from the Throne of God.' For with the coming of the presence of God into our life, heaven enters also, with the ample breath of the eternal, and where it enters, it cleanses and rejuvenates, heals and renews.

'Breathe *in* me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love as Thou dost love!'

As we become open to that living Breath, so will we take our part in the great Revival, the awakening that already is beginning to take place, and which at length will reach to all lands and all peoples. And the way to this end, in ourselves, is to cultivate the inner life to enable us the more perfectly to fulfil the service of love.

Isaiah foretells such an event in his wonderful picture of the Divine Spirit flooding the world with the knowledge of God, 'as the waters cover the sea.' It is the fulfilling issue, as in the Heart of God—when all things will relax into the universal harmony, and all life, as it were, tune-in to the Divine perfection. And earth, her life renewed, will fill her vacant place near

to the Throne of God, and her praise will be the more wonderful because it is the Song of the Redeemed.

Through man regenerate it will come about, man regenerate in Christ; even that which the earth-creation has been reaching out toward and anguishing for through all the long years. And it will be on that day when the children of God appear. For the earth will be renewed and healed at their coming—these blessed ones who tread in Heaven even as they tread on earth, for they carry heaven with them wherever they go. Truly are they the sons and daughters of God, for they have entered into their divine inheritance.

It will on that day be as if a restraining bondage had been released, a leash holding all Nature in durance. With one bound she will leap into the arms of God. All fear, and with it all cruelty will disappear, for love has drawn its sting. Then will all life break forth into singing and, in the Bible language, even the very 'trees of the field will clap their hands.' And in that sweet power and presence the earth will become young again.

But what is it that differentiates Isaiah's great prophecy from what we call wishful thinking? It is this, that it is, as all true prophecy is, anchored in a present realisation. He declares that 'NOW is the accepted time.' In other words, God's time is always the present. The doors of grace would open *now* if man were ready. It is our faithlessness that puts back that Day.

We should be earnest to practise out these things, in God's *present*, which is Now. Can we not bring heaven in, carry it with us, in simple trustful belief that 'we are *now* children of God?'

Breathe in me, Breath of God! Let me inbreathe of Thy Life and Love. And in the stirring of Thy Love let me find Thee in my brother. With what wonder would I pause, were I to truly realise the meaning of *this* moment, *this* place, just where I stand—that even *Here* Thou art, Thy presence and Thy goodness *very* near.

Blessed are the pure in heart. As our soul becomes pure and clean, so will Thy loving presence infill it.

Simply and directly, even as children of God, we would draw near to Thee in the living Present, love unto Love, truth unto Truth responding.

Q let me witness Thee, that no part in me may bear false witness to Thy Love.

Here and now do we truly dwell in a universe of Love, even in our Father's house. Here and now may we find ourselves even in Thy presence, Thy arms of Love around us, Thy Spirit breathing in our hearts. Here and now may we speak to one another the word of Peace.

There is nothing meaningless to him who has felt Life's living touch, and through that touch the immediacy of the Divine. In the mystery of that Love we live.

The way of Love is always present, God's perfect way always at hand, His benediction rests upon the loving heart.

15 One Real Life

THERE is one Real Life and no other. It is the ageless life of God: the Divine Presence. Apart from God and His Presence we have no real life at all. Our life in truth is the radiation of His presence in our hearts.

The impress of that Presence is Love; it is that Love which is beyond all other loves, and which we speak of as the Love of God. We sing of 'Love Divine, all loves excelling,' and truly man's experience of it is as the very 'joy of heaven, to earth come down,' And it is, in St. Paul's word, as 'the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.'

Let us, in His fellowship, together tread the path of inner communion, remembering our Lord's words: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.' For in His footsteps we must follow, if we would be His disciples indeed. As in the words of His first disciples, we enquire of him, 'Master, where dwellest thou?' For we long to be where He *is*; we behold in Him that which we fain would be. And His answer is still, 'Come and see!' And so He leads, and so we follow.

He calls us unto the tenderness of His love, for He loves us with an infinite love. Will you not respond to His love?

He calls us unto unity and unto fellowship with one another. Cast away the foolish spirit that imagines a separate good. We are all one in the Love of God.

Each moment I may come nearer to Thee, each moment learn more of Thee, inbreathing of Thy Love. And this is truly the necessity of my being.

Each moment I would be renewed, and sensitively heedful to Thy Word—not doing things by my own planning, but in lowliness listening, that I may be heedful to Thy word for my next step, abiding Thy direction.

Let my life be swiftly responsive and receptive to Thy Love. Moment by moment I meet Thee as it were afresh, who yet art with me all the time. Let this mind, this body, be pure, be clean, as befits Thy sanctuary.

As we follow Christ, we come ever more closely near to God's presence—indeed, nearer and nearer as we become like unto Him. For truly the dwelling-place of Christ was and is in the Heart of God. We reach, in Him, towards that experience which He presents with such an infinite attractiveness. On the one hand it is 'self-surrender'; on the other it is no more and no less than 'Christ in us.' In St. Paul's language, it is the goal of our pilgrimage: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory,' It implies that ultimate 'heaven-consciousness', which *is* our true life and our true experience. 'In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.'

It comes to be an abiding experience, a conjoining, a uniting, an 'at-one-ing', and then a fulfilling manifest in a very heavenly

fruit-bearing. 'Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.' As the branch to the vine, so will be that uniting: when the presence of God will so fill our hearts and minds that there is no place for 'self' at all. The claims of the 'self' must grow less and less, until we truly give of our all. 'I am the Vine, ye the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing.'

Where self is not, *there* is the presence of God filling all things.

O to dwell in the *present*, finding Thee, living moment by moment in deep consciousness of Thee; alive to the encompassing Reality!

The truth in me is Christ in me: light and life and love in me—apart from which this life is unreal, and as the play of a shadow, no more!

Let Love arise and obliterate the shadow, Love wherein the heart of God expresses, Love that is all compassion: so will God reveal within this heart and mind, and I behold His presence everywhere.

Here am I, under the shadow that I myself create, anxious, troubled, fretful, and sadly and painfully stumbling. Touch Thou these eyes of mine that I may see, and seeing rejoice; beholding Thee, in whom I am!

No true life have I apart from Thee! In the radiation of Thy Love in me, let all that is of the selfhood dissolve away. Let not my heart be as a market-place with its buying and selling. Be Thou sole occupant in this house which bears my name.

We are all questing the Reality, in one way or another: it is the central seeking of every one. Yes, in spite of our erring ways and our egoism, making us confuse the shadow with the substance. And in spite of the fact that we have 'strayed from His ways like lost sheep, and have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.' Yet there remains that hidden longing, that restless pulsing of our human heart which will find no peace until there come at length that peace of God 'which passeth understanding.'

'There is no salvation other than this, the life of God in the soul.' For 'what doth it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? And what would a man give in exchange for his soul?'

Quiet in myself, let me listen to Thy voice in me. What I am seeking, may I not find now, in the very present? Though I go far to seek Thee, Thou art *here* all the time.

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16 Our True Fellowship

It is through the fellowship of its members, one with another—fellowship in Christ, which, after all, is the only true fellowship—that the Church of God is at unity in itself. In the measure of that fellowship, so will be the revealing of Christ through His Church. We mean fellowship such as was known in the early Church. There was a depth in it such as we do not usually see today. St. John writes of it very intimately, telling of 'fellowship with Him,' and 'fellowship with one another.' The one relates to the other, and neither can be separate from the other. Their common denominator is love, love that is a caring for one another—that love and spiritual concern which is the evidence and the hall-mark of the presence of God, active in our human heart, and active in the Church. Apart from this we can only say that the Church is spiritually dead. How much we need a change of heart, beginning in the Church, which also is to say, beginning in ourselves.

As we behold and regard our fellows in that Love-light, the peace of God, in its sweet sanity, breathes upon, and enfolds our heart about, and every lingering fanaticism disappears. Nor can any unkind criticism find a haven within our thought.

There is only Love in very truth, if God is love. Let us then see to it that there be only love, yes, love in its

heavenliness, one with another. And let us join hands, and bless one another.

Except we respond we withhold ourselves from His blessing. Nevertheless, it is present to us at all times, as the very breath of our being.

The Love of God enfolds us all our days. Shall we not respond to that Love?

God protects you, cares for you, blesses you. And surely as we believe so will we experience. He is dealing with you wisely and lovingly. His hand is over you for your salvation. In His strength is your strength; and in His truth is your sincerity!

All life is perfect in God, and as in our hearts we draw near to God, the perfect One, beyond ourselves, even so, at that same instant, do we approach the perfect One within ourselves. In a wonderful way, and beyond our limited understanding, the two are one.

God's purpose toward mankind—toward each individual, and indeed toward every living thing, is one pure intent of love. We do not mean merely a universal sentiment of benevolence. No, the will of God, and the action of God are one, and what His will affirms, at that same moment His power is active to achieve. A poor leper came to Jesus, saying, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!' Jesus answered, 'I will, be thou clean!' And how instant to that word was the divine action, that wonderful revealing of the love of God.

Let us then simply and trustfully open ourselves, tuning-in to the heaven of the Love of God, making thus the needful connection, and, even at that instant the gracious Power is centrally and livingly present. For we live within a friendly Universe, which only needs our responsive recognition and openness to achieve in us its gracious heavenly purpose.

Let us then step out of the house of bondage, within the shadowland where the selfhood holds its mastery, with its false claims and demands—out of that spectral life into freedom and love, in joyous surrender unto that Life which is our life indeed, unto Christ, who is our true Self,

apart from whom we have no real life at all—unto God, Who is our all in all!

Be still, O my soul, 'wait thou only upon God.' From the death of 'self' there is ascension in consciousness, to Love Divine, and then an indwelling in His Presence.

The way is always present, the perfect way always at hand! Thou art ever near, giving of Thy benediction to the loving heart.

'It should be noted that the New Testament never speaks about "the *second* coming" of Christ, but always of His "coming", or, more accurately, His "presence". The Greek word is *parousia*, which has various shades of meaning, such as "presence", and "coming". In this connection it is practically equivalent to "revelation". The *parousia* of Christ is both a fact and a process. There have been many "comings" of Christ, at crucial moments in history when His presence, though always with us, has become, as it were, more powerfully present. We are living in such a time now.'

It is a time of very great need, and the revealing will, as always, be equal to that need, when darkness will give place to light, and the dark night to break of day.

'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringest good tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!'

Amid the chaos and upheaval, our human methods tragically failing, Faith still looks upward, beholding One at the helm, and the action of God quietly working, and unto divinest ends. It is because of our deep look into the present that we are able to believe into the future. Through the disordered elements, and the vast convulsive throbs of the heart of humanity in the midst, we may behold, not far off—even now it is knocking at the door—the New Age that is at hand. The ground is being prepared for a new Edifice, and man given a new opportunity. To the true of heart there is no occasion for despair. Faith looks through the appearances with a gladsome beholding. There is gold upon the hills to which we look.

17 The Fulfilling Presence

BEYOND the bounds of the selfhood is the presence of God, filling all things. His light is shining except where our own shadow falls.

Manifest Thy Nature through my nature, Thy life through my life, Thy Love through my love. Moment by moment would I give all to Thee, that the least little action may become a sacrament of adoration in love and truth, love and truth toward Thee, love and truth toward my fellows, every one.

Free me from all self-love. Let there be no idolatry in the sanctuary of my soul. Let me realise I am in my Father's House, even now as at any other time, being strengthened through inwardly abiding with Thee: so fulfilling my part in this outward world, and giving forth of the *reality* that I know.

Breathe Thy deep peace in me, that I may be still, very still and lowly-humble before Thee. Thus may I enter that Inner Shrine, wherein the selfhood may not intrude, and, there, look into Thy Light, Thy light of Love, whereby Thy children are empowered of Thee unto highest service—yes, in ways of richest, purest service.

May I feel more and more the inbreathing of Thy Love, which also, outbreathing through me, may shed forth of this outward life of mine, this body of limitation, which is not meant to imprison but to reveal, and to be as a candle to the flame of Thy Love. All I am, all I have, are these not Thine—to be used by Thee?

Our true communion is our participation of the very life of God, and our feeding on the Love of God.

There is a perfect poise of soul realised in self-surrender, and there is a co-ordinating perfect poise of body, too, when it is no longer a 'hold-up', but is now a responsive channel through which living waters are flowing plenteously, in streams of

blessing. In this resilient open condition, every part, every organ of our body, in its wholeness, will tend to adjust, co-operatingly and harmoniously, each to each, in mutual poise and balance. In this manner the body shares in that attunement with Life, and has its own precious part—revealing in that grace and uprightness in which nature and super-nature seem to meet, as it becomes more and more like unto that sacred body that treads in heavenly places.

We are all variously endowed inwardly for the kingdom of heaven even as we are outwardly in relation to the outward world.

We dwell in a universe of light and love, if once we may truly behold and understand. Doubt not that there are eyes which behold into our every thought and action. However we may think, we cannot act in a corner away from that observation.

Thou art leading me in ways I know not—and it is better so, for Thy ways are above my ways, even as Thy thought transcends mine own. Do Thou hold in Thine hands my will and my desire, that I may not fail Thee, by seeking to go my own way, and to work my own will.

Let my life become as a hand of Thine, O Healing Christ; let my service be as a word of Thine, tender, loving, compassionate!

That which is not of Love is not of Thee; it is absence of Thee in my conscious life. That which is not of Truth is not of Thee; it is absence of Thee in my conscious life. That which is not of Beauty is not of Thee; for that, too, is absence of Thee in my conscious life. There is that void where Thou art not. We call it by many names, and they mean the same. It is separation from Thee.

The pull of the outer world is away from good, away from truth, dislodging our life from its true centre, so that it becomes enmeshed amid discordant conditions which present themselves as real and, to our misery, are real enough in all conscience. For the fruitage of this experience is bitter and painful. Separate from the Greater Truth and Good, by which we

mean the Divine Order of His Creation to which we truly belong, the perfect breaks up, is no longer present to our seeing. All life stands separate if we are separate; its harmony at all points is broken if, in us, it is broken. All things approximate according to our manner of seeing. But let our heart turn to God, and we will at length see even through the eyes of Christ.

The true Silence is not so much a stillness, or dimming out of things, as a stillness to, or dimming out of self. It is an interior beholding of the goodness of God. At its deep core it is our realisation of the presence of God. For in a very real sense the Silence is the presence of God. We approach it in our turning toward God in the desire of our heart.

The secret of life is this: our turning to God, in child-like simplicity and trust, in all our ways.

The test of our faith is this: the earnest desire of our heart toward God.

Concentration is singleness of mind and purpose.

'Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.'

'As incense cast into the fire maketh a sweet smell by the smoke rising up to the air, right so a psalm savourly and softly sung, or said in a burning heart, giveth up a sweet smell to the Face of the Lord Jesus, and to all the court of heaven. There dare no fly rest upon the pot's brink boiling on the fire. Even so can no sinful delight rest upon a clean soul that is all belapped and warmed in the fire of love, boiling and blowing up psalms and prayers to Jesus. It maketh a soul familiar, and as it were hail-fellow with Jesus and with all the angels in heaven. It yieldeth grace to Jesus, and receiveth grace again.'

(Walter Hylton, A.D. 1433).

Every moment should be to us an occasion for praise.

The wonder-working of Jesus is not of supreme interest unless it hold for us a present significance. If the spiritual tempest that is raging today can be tranquillised by His

spoken word, and there supervene a great peace, that is of tremendous import—far more so to us than the stilling of a cyclone on the sea of Galilee. But does it not hold such a significance? And is it not through Christ alone that man may know that peace 'which passes understanding?'

18 Let the Church Awake

OH that the Church might be wide awake to its full meaning and its rich possibility! Why is it, in spite of so many good people within its ranks, so ineffective and inadequate as it faces our human need today? It fails its Master if it follows lesser guides. It must take the lead once more through the shining of the light of His Presence.

Is it not meant and ordained to be a very present living witness to His Life, Death and Resurrection—not, let us say, in terms of theology, but in living terms? Theology is secondary to the Life itself. Indeed, it is to no little extent our human effort to fill the gap where that Life is absent! For that Life, manifest, is the expression of His Spirit. The Body of the Lord, it was called, and it is still meant to be that, is very truth. When that meaning is recovered, Christ will walk the earth again.

And so He does, wherever the Church is truly found. Whenever but two or three come together in My Name, there am I in the midst, said our Lord. There, within that little number, is the living Church, for He is present. Here, as at one little point, we may realise the validity of His word, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Thus the deep, true mission of the Church, the living Church is not to declare Christ, but to reveal Him—her Name and Nature be His

Name and Nature, her compassion, her love, and service no other than His service and His Love.

'Immanuel, God with us!' is the banner of the Church of God. .

The Church began with an overwhelming baptism of the Divine Presence, and in that consciousness, in the radiance of His Spirit, it continued His ministry. It had no need to witness to Him if He was present in the midst. Its mission was to continue that ministry of compassion where He left off. For He said, 'Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father.'

Oh, that this might be so once again, is the prayer of many. Indeed, all who love the Church should pray day and night for the coming of the Spirit in a new and blessed Pentecost, beginning in themselves.

'Lord Jesus Christ, grow thou in me, and all things else recede,' wrote St. Bernard. It is our 'growth in grace'. It is not an attaining in and of ourselves, as it were by our own effort. It is the fructifying of the divine seed within our souls. It is that experience which St. Paul refers to when he writes of 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' And the measure in which this takes place in us is the measure of our perfection, no less and no more.

Let Thy sweetest light now shine where darkness is, and apparent emptiness. At the centre of every experience may we find Thy light shining and beckoning.

Love gives of herself, by very necessity, in the fulness of self-surrender, in the joy of the realisation of the presence of God.

Let me draw nigh unto Thee, Who art always nigh unto me. And this I do in self-surrender, giving of myself utterly, holding nothing back. Then will my life be pure, and clean, beautiful and loving, because Thy light is shining through.

If I might but convey Thy living touch, what are all words beside that? that which in itself brings freedom and release.

The soul pays homage to what it sees, understanding not that time and space are but a screen on which is thrown its own image. But when Thou lookest through, the light of Thy presence penetrates the veil, and Thy beautiful love-world reveals.

In what I see, may I not find Thee? in what I hear, feel, taste, experience Thee?

I would have my being in every part attuned to Thee; my hands become Thy hands of love, my feet Thy feet of service.

Let the mist of unreality so dissolve that mine eyes may see the splendour of Thy dawning.

But as yet the shadows play around us that we be not blinded by Thy Light, and till we are ready fully to receive and to give.

My life should not be divided, as it were into many compartments, but be as one all through, made one by Thy unifying Spirit.

Except Thou dost live in me, Thou apart from Whom there is no light or truth in me, I am indeed bereft. Thou art my soul's integrity. In Thee I step from the unreal to the Real, out of darkness into light.

I come *to* Thee, as a little child: I come *from* Thee, made strong to serve and bless my fellows.

'A small branch cut from the main one is separated from the whole tree. Likewise a man through enmity with another, severs himself from the whole of mankind. But God having called men as brothers to live a common life together, has endowed them with the freedom of becoming reconciled to one another after dissension.'

(*Marcus Aurelius*).

Beauty and truth and good will reveal at length in the oneness of a perfect harmony, both in man and nature. And it will be even as man is able to look into the Perfect, and to realise the spiritual side of his being. And this means his

growing discovery of God, and the kingdom of heaven within.

When Thou seest through mine eyes, than will I look upon a new heaven and a new earth.

19 Our Right Attitude

How much in life depends upon our attitude, how we face our daily experience, and whether we do so in humility as we should, or in that opposite way which can be offensive both to God and man. We may say of someone that he is blown up with self-conceit. It is not a pleasant sight. But it can have an uglier phase, a more subtle aspect, where it approaches and encroaches upon the spiritual. The vivid expressive word is self-righteousness. We think at once of the Pharisee of old.

Our spiritual life in truth is found in our turning to God, in childlike trust and simplicity in all our ways.

The Pharisees in Jesus' day, however much they may stand in deserved condemnation, represented a Movement which at its inception was very commendable. Great men and teachers like Hillel and Gamaliel were to be found in its ranks. Much as the Puritan movement in our own country began, so it began in protest to the all too potent, and, on the whole, downgrade influence of the Greco-Roman world abutting on its borders. Israel was God's nation, and the law was the bulwark of the state. The Pharisees held that if the Law was kept inviolable Israel would emerge from bondage into a splendour even greater than in the days of Solomon. As the Law was scrupulously obeyed, the hands of Moses being thereby uplifted, there would ensue a great national overcoming.

The apostle Paul testified of the Pharisees that they had a consuming zeal, though it was blind. The spiritual Principle was lost sight of in their idolatry of the written word. And the

latter became stretched to an inordinate degree, involving such a multitude of precepts that the keeping of the law became an impossibility to any not of the Rabbinical caste. And so they shut fast the door which they professed to open, prohibiting simple people from entering in.

Jesus passed through the land proclaiming the kingdom of God to be at hand, and healing the sick and infirm in the strength of His message. Here was something new which the Pharisees could not understand, and which they therefore condemned. Especially as in His teaching, Jesus ignored the whole minutiae of rules and regulations they laid so much stress upon. And not least because of the simplicity of His word and teaching, affirming that only one door was needful for the spirit of Truth to enter into every soul, and that was the door of repentance; and entirely setting aside that dead weight of restriction and exaction which turned the Sabbath, meant to be a day of rest and gladness, into a burden too heavy to be borne.

‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,’ said Jesus; and the power of that utterance went quivering through the Rabbinical strongholds. For their teaching concerning the Sabbath was, as the very corner-stone, foundational to all their doctrine.

The matter came to a head one Sabbath day in an incident which has not often been stressed as fully as it deserves. A number of influential Pharisees await Jesus in the synagogue which they know that He will enter, and with intent to entrap Him. He, reading their hearts, makes it an occasion at once of challenge and of appeal to their better nature.

‘And,’ writes St. Mark, ‘he entered into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day, that they might accuse him. And he said unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth!’

And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other.

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.'

Alas for those Pharisees who at that moment passed the word of judgment against themselves. That which they thought they were seeking stood before them, the emancipating word, the emancipating act, the open door to heaven itself. They preferred their own interpretation to the Truth itself. They were blind, they were deaf to the meaning, imagining the opposite. Failing in humility they failed in all the rest. And so they turned their backs upon Him, through Whom Light shone, the very light of the Love of God. And into the darkness of their own dark thoughts they turned, and into the night. They sought to slay Him, but could not: it was themselves they slew.

How needful is humility, the simple, open, trustful, believing attitude of a little child. Such simple faith brings its own reward. And such humility, how gracious it is! It is ever ready to receive fresh light, fresh truth, even if it means the surrender of many pre-conceived ideas. There is still more light and more truth to break forth from His Word.

How terrible is the apostasy of man—of you and me—when we consider the all-goodness of God—the Divine and perfect Love brooding over each one of us, with intent of goodness toward us beyond all our dreaming.

O my God, forgive us each and every one, in that we do not respond but are so prone to turn away from Thee. When we look into Thy forgiveness we look into Calvary. Even so let Thy Love break through our lives as a living fountain. And lead Thou us back once more; lead Thou us Home.

It is a good thing that God does not look upon us in the way we sometimes look upon Him, as if He were devoid of Love and Wisdom, which are the very qualities of His Nature and Being. And as if the course of that loving Wisdom could be deflected by every fortuitous prayer arising from man's errant heart. Only one kind of prayer does God answer directly, prayer that is in the name of Christ. For then our prayer is just as if it were Christ praying through us. And only when our heart is filled with His love and His divine compassion may we so pray.

With every breath I would breathe deep soul-breaths of Love and Life. Let me hear and respond to Thy Word—Thy living Message—as never before. Let me have vision of Thee in all whom I love, in all whom I meet.

Give to me intuition to speak the right word, and do the right thing at the right time, the moment that is wise and well—with joy in it!

20 What is Prayer?

WHAT we in general think of and express as prayer has quite a pre-Christian ancestry, and carries with it vestiges of that ancient world upon which, with our Lord's advent, the curtain closed. Yet still these threads from the past come trailing with it, threads which should have been plucked or fallen off long ago. How often we seem to turn to God in the sterner aspect of Jehovah than to our God and Father as revealed in Jesus Christ.

As in Him, as through a mirror, we look upon the face of God, even as when we pray to God, we should realise that He is looking upon us with the eyes of Christ.

How strange that the old manner of prayer should linger so—as it does in varying degrees with nearly all of us, when



we consider how Jesus, when His disciples came to Him, asking Him to teach them how to pray, took up the word, turned it as it were round about, and transfigured it. You must come to God, He taught them, in simple faith and trust, as befits the children of your heavenly Father. They whose hearts are given to God, should they not then indeed come to God, and speak to Him in a manner that befits the children of God? And will not the words they use be spoken in simple trust, out of their faithful, praiseful knowing or realising of the goodness of God?

We have no occasion, then, to frame with our lips any special word of beseeching as with anxious or fearful hearts—as it were in the manner of a servant, pleading an attention that might not otherwise be given. But when there is the near relationship of children it is different. They have, by reason of that relationship, a special approach.

The creeds step aside when the Great Love draws near. Then the divine world no longer seems afar off, but, as a seamless vesture, encompasses the spirit. And life becomes sensitised in the glow of Love Divine.

Let us more and more try to make that near approach of love to Love. It is the loving heart that draws most closely near to the loving Heart of All. And upon this matter none have written more helpfully or discerningly than Mr. Maillard who tells us that prayer should be the very language of love. And surely the prayer which gives joy to our heavenly Father is the prayer of the loving heart?

And so it is our Father's will that the loving heart should channel the Love Divine. Love is the at-one-ing influence, and we see it in Christ supreme. Let love but contact Love, and heavenly healing influences are in immediate operation. The inner side of every true prayer bears the seal of the Divine approval. The prayer of love is simple, trustful, faithful and believing.

Love is an over-flowing Fountain, the waters of which, life-giving, flow in, blessing unto all.

Thou dost make me clean through and through, and makest mine eye single, so that with heart uplifted, no longer confused by things of sense, I may commune with Thee, beholding into Thy Love. And, so discerning, may I not find Thee everywhere?

O Love Divine, there is no imperfection in Thee, or in Thy world in truth. Is then what I see that is contrary but the shadow of the beam that is in mine own eye, because of that in me which is not of Thee? For in Thy Light shall we see light, light that has no shadow in it at all.

'This is the message which He has given unto us,' wrote the dear evangelist of Love, 'that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all.' And is not God all in all, and do we not abide in Him in very very truth?

What can I be without Thee, O my God? Just nothing at all! Thou who art the reality of my life, the soul of all my moral being! I cannot find satisfaction in the appearance of things, with their falsifying impressions on the soul. Thee I seek, Thee would I seek with all my heart!

In Thee I partake of the Tree of Life: all else is but Dead Sea fruit. No true life have I apart from Thee: but in Thee I am, in Thee I truly live!

Thou holdest in Thine hands all that I lack, waiting for me to claim it as Thy child. Thou sayst, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened!'

What is it then that chokes the Word in me, that frustrates the search, that shuts the door? Is it not the all-too-strong control of the unreal thing? Behold, goodness is very present, and God's blessing with it. O Light of Love Divine, prepare in me an open door, and enter Thou! For where Thou art, there can be no darkness at all. Penetrate this poor heart of mine, Thou Light of Light, Thou Love Divine!

Belief is a spiritual attitude, the soul opening in simplicity to the inner Truth, the essential Life, all pervading.

He that hath the Son hath *life*; without the one, neither the other. The livingness in man is Christ, beloved of God. And all is revealed in that blessed Life through whom God's true creation is evidenced again on earth.

In Him is revealed the Divine Humanity that would embrace all mankind. He is its glowing Centre. And His word is ever sounding: Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. The Divine Humanity is, in Him, organically One, although in truth it has many members. Everyone who has had the least spiritual experience knows that such experience tends to fellowship and unity.

'Sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours.'

(Whittier).

21 God Answers Prayer

I AM sure that it is true that God answers prayer, and that there is no prayer—no real prayer—that remains unanswered. But His answer is, and must be, according to His wisdom and His love. It will therefore be a central answer, that is, central to our whole good, and therefore best of all. It is not something that comes from without, but rather it is an influx of His Spirit from within.

So would He keep us in true health and fitness, for that is surely His will. And to each and all who read these words I could say in truth that God loves you and cares for you. And that you are enfolded in His Love. It is His word of grace to

you. And as you become open more and more in consciousness of this truth so will you become more and more open to His healing power.

A simple childlike trust and inner confidence is what God desires of us—a quiet trust and confidence whatever the appearance at any moment may seem to be. And, concerning intercession, let me say that His power may work very graciously through our prayerful human channelling. And truly Christ may approach very near, and truly He may touch you with His hand.

Prayer, intercession, healing, they all relate. And each is a mixture or compound of three prime ingredients, faith, hope and love, the greatest of which, as St. Paul tells us, is love.

‘Love makes all heavy things light, all bitter things sweet. Let us then love with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength, with all our understanding, and with all our powers,’ wrote St. Francis.

‘Thou, when thou prayest,’ said Jesus, ‘enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father,’ whom thou must approach inwardly, or ‘in spirit and in truth.’

Thus, for these things to be, a centre of Stillness is needful, a place of inner quiet with God. We do not mean by this a silence from noises, for it can be achieved even amid an outward hubbub, but rather a silence from self. It is through the latter process that our minds become tranquillised, and our thoughts stilled. For what are our thoughts but little glints of perceiving in all directions, but through this uplift of consciousness we arrive at that purity of perception, that singleness of vision, so needful, as our Lord taught, in our spiritual journeying.

The point of Silence is the point of healing; but, above all, it is the love-centre within. God rests in us, and is active in us as from that point. And healing streams of blessing flow through—even through the channelling of the prayer of our heart.

'It is not things that disquiet us,' wrote Epictetus, 'but our opinion about things.'

'There must be perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper His word into it, before the light of God can shine in the soul and transform the soul. When passions are stilled and all worldly desires silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul.' (*Eckhart*).

'Grant us grace to surrender ourselves wholly unto Thee, to keep our souls before Thee like a still lake; that so the beams of Thy love may be mirrored therein, and may kindle in our hearts the beams of faith, and love and prayer. May we, through such stillness and hope, find strength and gladness in Thee, O God, now, and for evermore.' (*Joachim Embden*, 1595).

Till He arise centrally in us, and with mastery, every meaning other than that which He reveals, is but a shadowed meaning. But when He comes, clad as in the gold of dawn—as the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing—the true and heavenly meaning will emerge sweet and clear.

From that inner place of Quiet, we may realise the flowing through us of the Peace of God, unto our blessing, and unto the blessing of every one with whom, whether consciously or unconsciously, we make spiritual contact. God regards His children with eyes of tender compassion. We might say that in Christ He steps down to reveal His Love, and to awaken man to remembrance of what he truly is. When he remembers his divine estate, and turns to God and goodness, one by one the veilings of the soul will drop away, and the dissembling illusions dissolve into nothingness and disappear.

'Beloved, now are we the children of God,' and as we grow in, and our lives unfold to that realisation, so more and more will we behold Him as He is.

Then will we know that God in His nature and Being is all-love, and that it never can be otherwise. The coming of Love is the greatest event in the life of man, and has been so through all history.

Of God's children it is true to say that for ever and ever are they enfolded and infolded in His Being, and that in Him we 'live and move and have our being.'

His children are enfolded in His loving Presence, within and without, and it can never, not even for an instant, be otherwise. As we realise these things, so will we draw near and ever nearer to the Heart of God. We are, in our real life as we are, not in our own seeing, but in God's seeing.

In the *reality*, which inter-penetrates the present that we know, God's children are at one with Him, and He is their very being, and the fulness of His blessing is with them always and at all times, in wisdom and in love.

Christ drew back the curtain, disclosing the heavenly 'may be' to His disciples. 'Follow Me!' His word came, and still comes to them, so that that which 'may be' will be, and that ye may prove and know these things.

Amid the crises of our experience, when all the elements seem to be driving against us, there is the Divine Resource to which we may ever turn in our great need. It is the Rock of Ages, our bulwark, our light-house! And amid the vast unrest today of this world's great hour of need, it is, as it will prove at length to be, the determining essential Factor by which alone can things be truly righted.

22 Spiritual Practice

IN India one of the methods of spiritual practice is in the use of what is called the *mantram*, a mantram being a sacred word or text repeated over and over again. And, wisely used, a similar Christian practice can be very helpful, and a definite aid toward the quickening and unfolding of our interior or

spiritual life. But the matter is obvious enough, for a sacred word dwelt upon, or repeated, is an aid to our spiritual concentration and devotion. It is, of course, a well-known method of meditation.

How many of the words of our Lord may be used in this way, or words taken from the Psalms, in which we could include many words of help and comfort. For instance: 'God is my light and my salvation.' 'God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore I will not fear,' 'The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing,' and this, in a special way, 'Be still and know that I am God.' Or we may take just one little word, on which to dwell deeply and devotedly—a little word comprehending a fulness of meaning, as, for example, 'God' or 'Jesus', or simply 'Christ', or a word denoting some attribute of God, as 'love', or 'peace', or 'truth', or 'light', to mention a few. Or even a word like 'Is-ra-el' which we write in this way, to hint at the rich deep meaning of that word.

A quiet earnest personal meditation on such a word or such a text brings out much helpful meaning, strengthening us upon our way. For instance, this little word from the 19th Psalm, personally applied:

'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.' It is a word that it would be good to hold continually in our heart.

What are the words of our mouth? Does this not imply the words which we speak one with another—our ordinary conversation? Should not such be true in a kind, joyous, helpful, generous, open way—that is sincere and frank and kindly. God's test is that of truth and sincerity, and a loving heart.

'The meditation of my heart.' What does this mean? We may think of it as our contemplation in times of devotional silence, but it has a much simpler meaning than that, as well. It is the thought and feeling behind the words that we speak, those silent thoughts that pass

through our hearts from moment to moment. It is such that we pray should be acceptable in God's sight.

It is in this way we nourish the centre of reality within us, and become more and more immediately open to the big meanings of life. It is in this way that our lives adjust, and become responsive to and therefore channels of universal Goodness and Truth. It leads to self-surrender, and the infolding of the life of Christ within our own, referred to in the New Testament as our 'growth in grace'.

All words of truth may reach to us with a very present and homely meaning. And if our personal words, thoughts, feelings, were inspired by a near consciousness that He is present with us, what a difference that would make.

'Dear Brother, mind the Lord and stand in His will and counsel. And dwell in the pure measure of God in thee, and there thou wilt see the Lord God present with thee . . . The Lord God of Power give thee wisdom, courage, manhood, and boldness, to thresh down all deceit. Dear Heart, be valiant, and mind the pure Spirit of God in thee, to guide thee up into God, to thunder down all deceit within and without.' (*George Fox*).

George Fox was perhaps a little over-ardent in thundering down deceit from without, when there is a better way. We mean the way of Love, and Love is its own witness, and ever mightier than its opposite. For Love is as the Light, and where Love is present darkness cannot stay.

Let us look into life with the eyes of a child of God, for the child beholds the Father always near, and His Love everywhere, and that Love in the midst of our present experience. Love is conscious of the friendliness of all things, and of wonderful identity with all that is.

Love never worries over the past, but re-establishes all things in the present moment—finds all as it should be—Now!

Our spiritual light should be as the sun, illumining all that it shines upon. We are affected by that which we see,

for our organ of sight is negative. But reflecting the inner Vision we may radiate Love at all times, with blessing unto all.

The disciple is ever on the pilgrim way, which is an interior journey into knowledge and experience of God and His goodness, following in the footsteps of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. For him, as he goes forward each step is on new ground, new and fresh and unknown before in his experience. Hence the necessity of the One who knows, to go before and to lead and guide him gently onward.

23 Lift up Your Eyes

THE sky looks tempestuous. Dark, heavy clouds have rolled up from the west. They look like gloomy vessels sailing in a sea of blue. How deep the blue and how bright the light shining through. Now and then the splendour fades as a cloud passes over the sun. The cloud passes, and there is radiance again. It comes and goes, and is broken by intermittent heavy showers.

Now as I look the sky is a picture. It is like a blue ocean studded with islands. But the islands are enlarging, pressing ever nearer to one another as if to conjoin, becoming one vast cloud, like to some continent, with indented coastline, lapped by the sparkling seas around. And here and there, within its great expanse, a lake of blue.

Never did I see more deep a blue. Sky void of cloud, blue of infinite depth, as indeed it was. But the clouds were continually encroaching on that blue. How marvellous that ocean firmament, blue and deep, eternal, satisfying. It was being overclouded and lost to sight and vision.

That continent cloud-formed seemed divided into many lands, and some were separated by dark patches, menacing barriers, even as great mountains on our earth. And some were separated by inland seas, and some by great and widening inlets from the ocean. But ever the sky was changing and darker growing, the blue receding and the cloud expanding. And gradually the barriers dwindled as the darkness grew; they faded until they disappeared, and each land merged in each in one dark tyranny.

And thus did I meditate:

Man is but grass, as the prophet wrote. 'The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord shall stand forever.'

Man, too, is like the cloud, which cometh and goeth, but the blue sky of the Divine Providence remains, ever the same, and howsoever hidden it may be. God's Face it is, God's face, always serene. 'Seek ye My face!' the old word runs, and the answer springs, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' 'Come unto Me; dissolve yourselves in penitence within the warmth of My light. For art thou not other than thou seemest? For no true life hast thou apart from Me.'

And thus my thought ran on. What is this existence that we know? Like to the restless shadow, or like to the clouds above, hither and thither tossing before the wind. Life which seems, which when we try to grasp it slips our grasp. Life that seems but never truly is; a dream, a phantasm. Clouds wherein the sea and sunshine meet. Clouds fashioned by the storm and menacing. They come, they go; they dissolve and disappear; but the blue sky remains, Love remains, Heaven in its truth eternally.

All that I see—how strange it is—for it seems to me to repeat below. And what is here reflects above in all these cloud-shapes of the sky. Here we have the earth and sea—the sea, how different to that Blue, with its deep serenity! Yet my thought is what they tell of in the life of man. The imperfection of our earth portrays the hidden life within, even as the body the imprint of its pervading soul. Though the land we tread

may seem secure we know that it is changing continually. What was once dry land is now under the sea. Nothing is really secure under our feet, and every land is changing, as the ages show. All is mutability, as a poet writes. So with each little human life. And even so with nations, and with peoples. All is subject to the law of change. Our outward life is made of changing substance. Were it not so, indeed, then alarm! for all would be lost. Growth, without that lay', would be impossible.

Our lives, like to the clouds, take on their beauty from the shining glory within us and around. The outward life of man is like unto the dry land, laved by the great waters. Our little separate lives are not unlike the clouds that sail the heavens. Our egos spring forth in their expansion like these little clouds, and as they grow intense—in the selfhood swelling, they hide the blue sky above, and blot out the eternal.

Our life is like the land; dry land, which becomes desert except it be irrigated by those living waters which make it fertile and beautiful.

And so, from the serene Eternal, comes to man the message of the ages: Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you. Let your separations dissolve in Me. Let My Love-light shine and glow in you, and be ye beautiful in Me!

This outward vesture of thine, of thy imagination woven, so opaque and dark, as a cloud is dark in the heavens: as it dissolves in Me, so will it, like water-vapour, dissolve in a shower of blessing: and your true life will reveal—your true life which is My life in you: for ye are children, not of the darkness, but of the Light. And so I charge you, children of Light, go forth and render highest service to all that live!

Open mine eyes that I may truly see the spiritual significance of all life, and discern my inner relationship and unity with the Whole. Give me that purity of vision, with a strength from Thee, to receive of Thy Word, catching more and more of the meaning, becoming more

and more receptive to it—Thy Word, uttered in and through all life, meeting me *now*. Touch my life with Thy cleansing touch that I may be worthy (who am so unworthy) to rise to that true apprehension.

24 Spiritual Foundations

THE beautiful and heavenly Society that we look toward, is one not gradually and laboriously to be built up, as it were on economic foundations; it will be a simple unfolding of the 'kingdom of heaven' consciousness, a spontaneous expression in a communal way, of an awakened humanity. It will be no mechanical structure, but an experience of an accord with something that divinely *is*, something that is true in the very present. In other words, it (the 'kingdom of heaven') has divine foundations, 'It is prepared,' so runs the old message. Man has but to enter in. The Sermon on the Mount is its code, challenging the economy of the nations throughout the ages. From it alone may come peace on earth and goodwill. Its working out is opposite to that of the present order, from whence arises war and every resultant evil. It inculcates *love* amid every relationship, not merely in sentiment but in practice. And it affirms the Love of God as a dynamic power of goodness through the whole range of human experience.

It would once have been said that this is 'millennial teaching', and so, not sneered at, it would be simply dismissed on the ground that man is not ready for it, nor will be for at least a thousand years. It may be all right in some heaven above the skies, it would be said, but it is quite out of keeping today in this practical age of ours. 'It is a beautiful dream of the future, but that is all that is in it.' Yet,

‘Is it a dream?

Nay, but the lack of it the dream,
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.’

It is more than the hope of the ages. It tells of something that is true—deeply, foundationally and wonderfully true—and of which Jesus knew and taught, out of His own sure knowledge and awareness. It was not just simply His dream of some future kingdom of heaven. Though it was nearly two thousand years ago, when He taught, He spoke of the ‘Kingdom’ in an immediate sense. Man is interested in the future that is to be, but his *concern* is with the present that now is. And the words of Christ related to present truth and present reality—the present in which people are interested, just as they are today in what is possible *now*. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, He said. ‘Look! the fields are white already to harvest.’ As if He had said, It is not merely a beautiful dream, it is much more than that: for it is practical and possible now if you will but have it so. You have but to change your attitude to Life, and God will do the rest—God in you, and you in God.

What was present and possible then is equally present and possible now; not less so by any means.

‘Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hate, that I may bring love;
where there is offence, that I may bring pardon;
where there is discord, that I may bring union;
where there is error, that I may bring truth;
where there is doubt, that I may bring faith;
where there is despair, that I may bring hope;
where there is darkness, that I may bring light;
where there is sadness, that I may bring joy!’

Jesus opens a present door to a present realisation.

History shows that human ideologies, put into practice, break in upon themselves, and speedily disrupt. Only that teaching, built upon divine foundations, can endure. While not revolutionary, it aims at a no less drastic reconstruction, a world fit for the sons of God. It does not wait for the many to

be ready. This, indeed, as we scan the world, would seem a hopeless expectancy. No, it will be wrought through the consecrated few, who are described in the last book of the Bible as the 'called and chosen' ones, through whom His power will work to fulfil His chosen Purpose. For they are prepared and they do not seek their own, but their lives are surrendered unto His will and blessing. God uses the few for the blessing of the many, for He is tenderly compassionate over all His works. His nature and Being is one unutterable Love from eternity to eternity.

Down the long years His 'called and chosen' ones have stepped out, and through them the spiritual life has been quickened in many, and the great revivals have taken place. They have caught His message anew and have sought to live it out. Many of these ones remain nameless, remembered only in heaven, but a few names of the great saints and seers come down to us, still fresh and fragrant, because of the fragrance of their lives. There was, for instance, St. Francis, who dreamed of a fraternity that ultimately would embrace all people, and in which all might receive their good as from God, not holding riches other than in common, each freed from all personal anxiety through the balance of mutual service.

'The past is dead—the present is thine own,' wrote Shelley. 'Take it while it is still yours, and fix your mind not on what you have done long ago to hurt, but on what you may do now to help.'

In simple trust be open to receive, so that thou mayst inbreathe of the living Word, partake of its heavenly nourishing, which is the rich content of all that truly is.'

Draw me into Thy Oneness, that, instrument to Thy Love, I may convey Thy healing touch to my fellows—yet not in my own will, but in Thine.

Be Thou in me my strength and love, my joy and peace. And let me be true in Thy truth. 'Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God, in every part with praise, that my whole being may proclaim Thy Being and Thy ways.'

How can I truly serve and help my fellows in a healing way unless Love pours through even as I think of them?

25 Life in Balance

To get life in its sweet healthful balance, we need to realise the detail in its connection with the Whole. In the little the larger may be reflected even in the measure of our attitude to the same. To get life in its sweet healthful balance, we must see things in their true spiritual setting. Our true attitude at all times is the ground of our communication with the Love-Truth of the heavenly World, in its grace and goodness, that is inherent everywhere. Once man realises the immediacy of that heavenly World, he will leap into salvation.

Alas, that there should be so dread a screen of darkness obscuring that holy Light, so that but a void and an emptiness is seen. And when the light that be in him is darkness, then how great is that darkness! The splendour of our modern 'civilisation' is wonderful, or would be so, were it not mated by an inner deadness. For it has plunged into a dread materialism in which all true values are turned upside down.

Not that man is evil. The darkness is incidental to the terrible times we have been passing through. After the Great War, it has been said, there fell a twilight on the nations, but after the late World-War, midnight! But in the darkness energies are arising that will shape the world as it is to be. We need an 'Upper Room' preparing for a New Pentecost.

A bugle calls from heaven's ramparts bidding the Church awake, the Church that is compounded of single individuals like you and me. By our true, loyal, faithful response will that screen of darkness be rifted. And through the channelling of our self-surrender of all that which we have called our own to the sole occupancy of Christ, will Heaven's sacred light inflow, more and more, till only God and His Love be seen and known. Then will we be imbued with power to overcome the enemy strongholds. Light has but to reveal to prove itself omnipotent; even so it is with Love Divine.

When light and darkness meet, the darkness disappears; when truth and falsehood come face to face, the falsehood is destroyed; when Life meets death, death is nowhere to be found.

God calls us to His standard from within the very place where we are. In Him is no great nor small. That which is truly great is always close and near. We touch the immeasurable in our right attitude to life, both in the little and in the great. Life leads on from the lesser to the greater responsibility. Let us make this, then, our first endeavour, to fulfil that which is at hand, the immediate duty or obligation. If we would truly prepare for greater service, let us see to it that we have the motive to perform the immediate duty which lies in our path.

By this we do not merely mean its outer shape, but also its inner aspect. We see it in our willingness to sacrifice in little things one for another—upholding so our Christian ideal. In all ways we owe service to our fellows, yet as unto Christ in our fellows. 'If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?'

The time may, however, come when we must get right away from old associations and foster our new life among new conditions. It is written that Abraham received such a word: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee.' Jacob too, left his father's house, though in a different manner. He left it, pursued by fear, for his life had not been beautiful, his speech had not been true, and he had wronged his brother. The fear was sharpened by the sting of a troubled conscience with which he had to wrestle many years, passing through many a chastening experience. But he had in him that which made up for what was amiss; and in his extremity he found God. When in contrition he realised his own utter weakness, there came to him a strength other than his own. Love met him on his way, and the discipline of a hard bondage was rendered light by reason of love. And in the end he was led back to his own house. So they who wander forth are often led

back again to the old places, and they return laden with the fruits of their experiences, having gained what previously they lacked.

O my God, let me seek Thee for Thine own sake, yielding myself wholly to Thee. Let me be emptied of the selfhood as I go forward in my journey to meet Thee. Let me put aside from me all mere personal possessions, and loves and clings. For Thou dost claim my whole heart. I do not truly love Thee unless I love Thee altogether.

Teach me, then, to love Thee with all my heart and strength and mind.

Breathe in my breathing, O thou Life of Love within, so that I may attune to the divine meaning of things. Spiritualise my seeing, O my God.

So let my life, in every way—expressing in thought and feeling, in speech and action—be prompted by Thy Spirit. Be Thou my motive and my object in everything I do.

26 In Simple Faith

O THAT I might live in simple faith, faith mounting into Love! What is this faith, when it is illumined in Love? Is it not life, real life? Life in realisation, life in adoration, the inner flowing into the outer? Is it not consciousness of God's presence within, and irradiant without?

So would I seek Thee, that I may find Thee; find Thee everywhere, and amid everything; never apart, always near!

So would I realise my life, and all life in its wholeness, as spiritual—even unto the body, in its every member, in its every part, all together one unity in the Love divine! The whole life as one Life, no part separate from another!

All life in its *ensemble* is God expressing. Only in disunity is evil found, evil that is a severance, a breaking away of the part from the Whole.

Evil is like unto an insurrection in the spiritual Body, even as disease is on the physical level, and I think the whole Universe is concerned to set things right.

It stands in a mystery, for in the heart of God is no evil, nor could there be, nor has there ever been from the beginning. His eyes are too pure to behold iniquity. For God is Love, and through all eternity never has been, and never could be other than Love.

His will, then, is one of blessing throughout eternity. In the beginning it was so, and never, never can it be other than that Man is restored to his true state of blessedness in the measure that God enters into his life. As the Love of God enters in, so evil passes out. Where His presence is, evil is nowhere to be found. Therefore the coming of His presence is the banishing of evil.

‘In all eternity no music is so sweet, as when man’s heart with God in unison doth beat.’

There is no truth really, other than the Truth of God. Therefore in a true understanding there is no evil, although in the life of man it has a terrible reality. And yet, as we have said, when God enters in—into the heart of man, made clean—to that degree evil passes out. Only in man’s seeing and knowing, apart from Love, apart from God, is evil to be found.

We may say that darkness is a void, for where light is present it is nowhere to be found. Even so is it with evil, which is spiritual darkness, and which, when Love from heaven shines through the hearts of men, will disappear completely. As it is the evidence of the absence of Love Divine, so it is the presence of Love Divine that is its remedy.

To meet the present evil, the dark menace of a godless materialism—indeed, to meet evil at all times—what is needed of man is the upward turning of his heart toward God and Goodness, which is the essence of every true prayer. It is the

process of our interior tuning-in to the divine Reality. In the measure in which we are able to do this will we enable the Love of God to pour through with infinite blessing, which is Love's intent at all times, and which is only prevented by our human apostasy. Man is never more truly himself than when his heart is filled with the Love of God. It is through the incoming of the presence of the Love of God that man will rise to his true estate, and recover his divine inheritance.

Prayer is the process of the soul's progress, first in the way of faith, and then in the way of Love. Our faith, reaching upward, should be an ever more beautiful becoming, through an ever more sensitive channelling of the Love of God. 'The body sentient is blessed and healed and made alive in the redeeming Love.' writes Brother James.

Reaching unto the perfect, as Jesus teaches, 'because our Father in heaven is perfect.' And this means harmony in every part of our being, not one part separate. And it is through the power of the Spirit, which unifies our nature. Then is our eye single, and our body full of light. It is the mastery of the Love of God in us, and this is our true and heavenly experience.

Receptive to Thee in every way, not one part asserting its separateness, made clean and pure within and without, our life expands to embrace others in its love, and is increased thereby. For have they not their own true place within our life?

God, writes William Law, is perfect Goodness. 'He is the unchangeable, overflowing Fountain of good, that sends forth nothing but good to all eternity. He is the Love itself, the unmixed, immeasurable Love, doing nothing but from love, giving nothing but gifts of love, to everything that He has made; requiring nothing of all His creatures, but the spirit, and fruits of that love, which brought them into being.'

'As the Sun has but one nature, and can give forth nothing but the blessings of light; so the Holy Triune God has but one nature and intent towards all the creation,

which is to pour forth the riches and sweetness of His Divine Perfections, upon every thing that is capable of them, and according to its capacity to receive them.'

(William Law).

If we fail in faith, we fail in vision, that is, in realisation. By faith we grow in grace and truth. It is our spiritual openness. It enables the incoming of the Spirit of God, which is working and never ceases to work His good and gracious will and purpose in our lives and everywhere. Except where it is prevented through faithlessness! Where there is faith's openness, the Spirit is present always and at all times.

Absence of faith, what does it signify? Is it not the clinging to the world of sense-impressions, half true, but mostly shadow? Is it not the separation of the self from Thee, O God, of the part from the Whole, of the member from the oneness of the Body? It is that which limits, and darkens, and injures, and is blind; and puts the second-best before the best, and makes the quest of the Kingdom a secondary thing.

O let true prayer, the prayer of faith, breathe in me, reaching unto and resting at length in Love, the Love of God. Is not such prayer communion, is it not Vision? Teach me to pray without weariness the true prayer which is Thy word in me, which once it wakens can never cease. It is the uplifting of our heart to Thee, until the effort ceases to be effort, and Love pours forth in a great compassion from which not one is excluded.

27 Beyond the Physical

ONE may easily imagine that to those who dwell on the heavenly side of the border-land that we think of as death, our mortal life on earth will be seen as encompassed by a

dark shadow or gloom, much as we are here prevented, except in the light of faith, from any perception of our loved ones who have passed into the Beyond. But the prevention, the obscurity, the fog-screen, blinding our vision here, probably hangs more heavily than to our dear ones upon the other side; for it is on this side that the darkness lies.

Until the inner eye be opened to the spiritual Reality, bringing awareness of God's near presence, apart perhaps from the light of spiritualism, death cannot be other to us than a complete black-out. And apart, too, we should also say, from the solace of words sweet and sacred that speak into our heart, bringing warmth and faith that 'though I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there!'

The natural man cannot easily conceive of other than a physical reality. 'Except I touch the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side,' said Thomas, 'I will not believe.' It is the instinctive reaction of man unable to perceive other than through the mirror of the senses. Except we may, by sense contact—through some transcending experience—touch those very wounds in Christ's sacred Body (those openings of grace, for us, into the Divine Reality), we will not believe. So much are we the victims of our senses! And yet 'blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.' It is a call to simple faith, a simple faith which will prove its validity as it unfolds. Even as Jesus said, 'he that doeth the will shall know of the teaching.' The way then is set before us to prove these things. Give of yourself unto the highest that you know, and that highest will vindicate itself in your experience.

The loose ends of our experience here are gathered up in a richer experience There. The beautiful and true and heavenly that we hold to in simple faith here, will be ours There in a very heaven of realisation.

In the little book, 'Christ in you', there is in reference to the after-life, a suggestive passage which runs as follows:

'You speak of us as the unseen. It is quite the reverse. We are on the only real Plane, and your physical plane, or plane of the senses is to us the unreal or shadow. We

find many vital laws exactly the opposite to those in operation on your plane.'

There would be no separation, we also read, were it not for fear, which as a dark fog encompasses this world of ours.

There have, however, been many voices down the years witnessing to the belief in the immortality of the soul. But this for many merely implies a continuity of experience into the Beyond. Yet, not denying this, let us affirm that the *immortality* in man, the *life* that is 'Life indeed,' is the incoming of the Life of God in the soul, and no other.

True knowledge, which is spiritual understanding, cannot be ours until this 'pearl of great price' is found, and our heart is baptised into the great Peace. The outer unrest and mental turmoil wind their web of darkness about the inner kingdom of Divine Love, hiding so what should be plain for all to see. And so it is that instead of that, we see life in all its sadness, as when the rain sobs without, and the wind mourns through the streets on a dark November night.

Life continues into the Beyond. But outward continuity is not spiritual immortality. Let us never forget this, that we enter into Life, not through physical death, but through Christ. There is only one pathway to that Life which 'maketh all things new.'

'There remaineth a rest for the people of God.' Is it not glad, good tidings, then, to know that beyond is not darkness, but light? We journey unto God, and 'God is Light, in whom is no darkness at all.' The pathway of truth winds on until it emerges out of our human temporal into God's eternal.

But while in the future nestles the heavenly consummation, when God's full Day will dissipate all shadows, and break through in its beatitude, the divine call to us is not for tomorrow, but today, just where we are, and where we find ourselves in the very present. 'Now,' we are told, 'is the accepted time,' and it is so always and always. For truly, if we will have it so, Heaven is Here no less than There. From our present platform of experience we may enter into Life—

here touch the heavenly, with its breathing of the Breath of God, sweet and fresh and wonderful—here find the secret place where He abides, He who, unseen, is yet near to us in all our journeying.

We are all variously endowed inwardly for the kingdom of heaven, even as we are outwardly in relation to the outward world.

We dwell in a universe of Light and Love. Doubt not there are Eyes that can behold into our every thought and action. However we may think, we cannot act in a corner away from that instant perceiving. In the measure that our soul-action is good and true, there is a Divine appraisalment.

There is a perfect poise of soul realised in self-surrender, and there is a co-ordinating perfect poise of body, too. And it should be increasingly so in the measure that we are channels to His service, in ways of healing and of blessing.

It does not matter very much what people think of us. What is much more important is how we think of them.

28 The Purpose of Life

‘THIS is the purpose of life, to know and to be known of God.’ In this brief sentence is epitomised the richest, fullest experience possible in the life of man. It is that toward which every true soul is unconsciously reaching out.

In the Shorter Catechism we have a variant of this in the question, ‘What is the chief end of man?’ and the answer to it, ‘Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.’ Yet it is the former that explains the latter, rather than the contrary. For how can man glorify God except by revealing Him in his life?

The Light that fills the Universe would be invisible apart from the Sun and the Stars that reveal it. The Light shines resplendent from them and is thus glorified by them. God is Love, and God is Light. In the General Epistle of St. John, we read these words: 'This is the message which was given unto us, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all.' Man's true purpose, then, is to reveal the Love-light that is God, that it may shine through him, and be glorified by him. 'Awake, my glory; awake lute and harp: I myself will awake right early. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people; and I will sing unto thee among the nations,' cried the psalmist of old, with a meaning not wholly dissimilar.

Yet to glorify is not merely to praise. We glorify God as the lamp reveals the light. Our praise is perfected when only the light is seen, and not the lamp at all. Then it is as the love-radiance of God shining through and rejoicing in the soul.

God loves our human praise, as the Scriptures tell, praise that springs spontaneously and adoringly from grateful hearts. It is indeed our most acceptable offering. We read even this, that God 'inhabitest the praises of Israel.' It means that God is near in His very presence when our hearts turn to Him in a pure gratitude, lovingly and adoringly, in simple trust, in faith. Herein is that praise to which the Love of God responds. If our praise is such when we meet in worship, then blessed is that worship. But it is not blessed if it is only with our lips and not with our hearts.

Yet in that deeper experience of which we have told, God does not merely dwell within our praises, but He comes to dwell within our hearts, when at length His holy light will shine through, and His Name be glorified in us and through our experience. And this is the heavenly hall-mark of the truly Christian experience, the experience of Christ in us. It is presented as the goal set before every disciple. The outward formality is false unless there is, with it, a live and loving experience.

. Every moment as it comes should be vivid with meaning to the enlightened soul. Oh, let our lives be filled with

adoration, a pure adoration, amid everything—in and through every thought, every action, beholding Him, knowing Him, the all-loving One.

Oh, to be strong and sound and sane, in the truth of our being, in largeness of heart, in the fellowship of the Great Love!

Are we not children of God, and should we not love one another, and overcome, in the strength of that love, all false images, bondages, preventions?

Thou spreadest a table of good things before me, from which to partake every day, though the unseeing may know nought of it at all.

The discovery of God is the discovery of kinship everywhere. In everyone I meet, wherever I may go, I meet Thee. In the joy of a clear vision I would journey, ever more inwardly perceptive, tracing step by step the foot-prints of Goodness and Beauty, in ever richer communion, with ever surer knowledge: so walking with open consciousness in the Garden of God—ever living, thinking, acting, from the highest that is in me.

Therefore, Thee would I realise in a present immediacy; hear Thy voice speaking, to which my heart responds! Radiate, O my soul, the Light that is within, the Love that fills thee now!

Praise ascends by degrees to the Throne of God. 'Come, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together.' In heaven, and in the heavenly consciousness, there is one atmosphere, and it is praise to God. But there praise is not merely a loving outward worship of a God we look toward; it is the purest operation of love, even the radiation of His presence. There God is everywhere, and the life of all in each and all expressing; and the angel-life is His own life shining through His child. Thus God is glorified in heaven, which is our human, happy, holy life, abiding in His presence.

Yes, in heaven, Life is resurgent with His presence everywhere. All are as one in heaven, each in all, and all in each, in love and joy, and praise, which is rapture of life, unceasing.

Thus in heaven His Name is glorified, in the radiation of His presence, His love and goodness, outpouring everywhere, as a living Fountain in the midst. Therefore, they stand, the saints of God, before the Throne, from whence the living waters flow.

But heaven is not a place in an outward sense. Man, in heavenly consciousness is in heaven. And heaven is felt and known in his delight in God, his inner freedom and expansion of spirit, and in his release from every mental inhibition.

29 Christmas Bells

*Christmas bells are ringing,
Christmas voices singing,
Down the ages,
Down the years.*

THEY sound to a hidden melody enshrining the Divine message of God to man—the eternal Word, and all-loving and all lovely. To everyone it sounds, though everyone may not hear. Yet will that melody never cease until every soul is caught at length in its noose of love. Only so may we fulfil our destiny, ordained from the beginning. By it life is quickened and renewed, and recovers its lost meaning. Till then it is like to an unfinished sentence or period, reaching as yet but to some comma or semi-colon, and meaning neither the one thing nor the other. Our life is obscure until it is caught in the noose of the love of God. Then it will be lit with new meaning flooding into the past as into the present.

When we are sensitive to hear that melody, we will catch and heed the throbbing word that speaks within, the word formulating into the divine invitation, 'Come ye, oh come ye, to Bethlehem.' It is the place of our soul's refreshment; it is central to our seeking. It is brooded over by love; it is engirdled

by the hills of God; it is where the Child of grace is born. For which reason we are all seeking Bethlehem, some with open vision, but others blindly. And some in their blind and troubled seeking take contrary ways, and instead of pursuing the plain path, take 'short cuts' that are misleading, and into tortuous byways, until at length they are lost and do not know what to do. And they wander into the darkness, hopeless and bewildered—until, amid the darkness a light shines from a lantern, and One stands there. He proves to be their Shepherd, and He has been searching for His sheep until He has found. Christ is that good Shepherd, and we are 'the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.'

'My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill, and were scattered upon the face of the earth,' we read in Ezekiel. 'And my flock became a prey to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but fed themselves, and fed not my flock. But I, saith the Lord, will both search my sheep and seek them out, and will deliver them from out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost.'

And so the Good Shepherd comes to search out, and bring back, and to shepherd His people back into their heavenly fold, resting not until that job is done. He comes 'to seek and to save that which was lost.' On Him 'is laid the iniquity of us all.' the charge of seeking and searching for His lost and straying sheep in all the places of their helpless, hopeless, zigzag wandering.

The soul of man is in the Divine care, as the sheep is in the care of the shepherd. If the sheep wander astray, the shepherd's duty is to rescue it, or if it is in danger, to protect it. For sheep are prone to go astray, and that is why they have to be shepherded. And so when the Shepherd finds his sheep, he does not punish it for disobedience; no, he bears it on his shoulder in triumph back to its fold, rejoicing that he has found his sheep.

The good shepherds 'watch their flocks by night.' They take their calling from their Master, whose vigilance never ceases, and who, they know, sacrifices his own life for his sheep. They lead their flock to where the pasture is sweetest and freshest, even to the Hills of Bethlehem, where that heavenly music is heard, meeting our human praise—even as one of old had sung, in that same place, he too, shepherding his sheep, and, with the refrain, 'The Lord is *my* Shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.' And he, good shepherd though he was, knew that far, far more than he, did that Perfect Shepherd keep watch and ward over *His* sheep: so great is that Love, the Love of God enfolding the lives of men.

Let man but respond in his own love and truth, loving God and loving his fellow, and himself forgetting; and he will experience the blessing of God, and all things working together for good in all his ways.

In their quiet vigil, in the silence of that holy night, Heaven drew very near. The shepherds became conscious of the Eternal, and of a word, sacred beyond all words, speaking into their hearts, a word of truth and love and joy unspeakable. And they were lifted up in rapture, and they found themselves listening to angelic strains, swelling into a mighty chorus of praise. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and goodwill.'

Their earnest vigil made possible the revelation.

In the sweet words of old the story runs:

'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'

And, for us, too, it is *this* day, this very present day, even *today*, if we will have it so.

30 All Life is One

TRULY all Life is One; and, deeply, all Life is God, and His manifestation. It infills through open channels. And open channels are hearts that are open in simple, trustful, believing faith—faith, not as a formula, but faith in a living vital sense, operative in the very present, just where we are.

It is not through supplication that the temperature of life is raised. Rather, it is by our inner truth, truth fanned and enkindled into a living flame by the breath of God. For that breath, that holy Breath, is the breath of Love.

Let us face the difficulties that encompass us with a high courage, but not in our own strength. But rather on that dependable Strength, ever close and near to us, more than our own: that Strength which will surely be felt and found, as we are true, and as our hearts are loving.

If we have faith, and grace but to stand still, and—conscious of our own separate, personal inadequacy—with heart and mind inly turned to Him—not with any time-lapse intervening, but instantly, even at that moment of self-surrender, will the heavenly Blessing flood through our being.

If we can but be quiet in ourselves and from ourselves, and stand back and, in that self-yielding, believing and rejoicing, will we not witness and experience the richness of His grace, the wonder of His Love? Love, which is God, is seeking in us, too, to be incarnate. It is above us and around and within, and tenderly, as with myriad eyes perceiving, 'watches over all His works.' Love is responsive to our human need; and is instant to meet the moment, the opportunity which we, at length, through faith, provide.

When once God rests in our human consciousness, when once that quiet poise is found, all is well, and all good tends towards us.

'Tis the front towards life that matters most—
The tone, the point of view,
The constancy that in defeat
Remains untouched and true.'

'God loves all mankind alike,' wrote Paracelsus, 'but not all men love God with the same kind of love. Each of God's children have the same inheritance, but one squanders while another preserves it. That which God has made equal is made unequal by the actions of men. Each man taking his cross upon himself finds therein his reward. Every misfortune is a fortune, because divine goodness gives to everyone that which he most needs for his future development; the suffering begins only when discontent, the result of the non-recognition of eternal law, steps in. The greater the obstacle to combat the greater will be the victory.'

Life is prosaic because we move amid the great wonder and mystery God-unconscious. But, oh, if we were of God conscious, and our hearts quickened by the word of truth, what a difference! If it comes not in the action, then surely it will meet us in the reaction; if it touch us not directly, then surely it will find us indirectly. When once dawns this Vision the old ways will no longer suffice. For this perception amid contrary things is the word of God to us of a land and an inheritance.

We may go in and out as we did, we may tread the same daily round, but it is different. We see differently. We do not accept things as they seem to be. They are the same, yet not the same. According to the light with which we see is the difference. What is sombre in the shadow, in the glow of light is illumined. No longer do we see things merely in their narrow limits, and local setting. We catch a new significance. What was *hidden* is revealed. An *inwardness*, the inner meaning breaking through is apparent to us. There is a spiritual background that is Beautiful, a richer encompassment we cannot get away from. In this creative Light by which we see, all things appear as they *truly* are, good and true and perfect. By our true perception we

do a radical work, inviting, inducing that *which is* out of that which seems. It is our recognition of that divine inward content whenever we look on anything in its outer similitude.

This is no contented acceptance of things as they are; it is a growing impossibility of seeing them as they are not. For life is not true until we ourselves are true, and wholly and utterly true. Nor can we know truth until our perceptions register the truth sincerely; nor can we know a loving universe until our heart is aflame with compassion and with love.

'For love doth make thee one with every soul:

Thy brother's good and ill thy very own!'

If at all times we saw—God, amid the thing that we do, in the one whom we meet, how different life would be, how alive with meaning and interest, how electric in its very touching?

All life is radio-active in its truth.

What is God? God is that Oneness, Singleness, Integrity, yes, *personalness*, which is the truth of all that lives. God is life, which is *itself* everywhere, and everywhere *Itself*. It is fresh and young at all times, Ages come and ages go, but Its feature is perennial youth.

We have to make one step, but one rightward turn, into That, knowing then that we *are* That, that It is our life, and there is no other.

God is that Fountain-source which man may dip into and be renewed. As man functions from his own truth (that is, through sincerity, which also implies self *surrender*) he dips from that great Resource.

'He that is kind to all that lives is blest by heaven and loved by man.'

The whole Universe is filled with God. It is baptised daily by His Presence. As Light, all-filling, so is that Presence everywhere. It is That on which all life falls back and is sustained, unto which it succumbs during the deep hours of sleep, and is refreshed and strengthened.

31 By True Prayer

By true prayer our life unfolds in what we may perhaps call its heavenly quality, which brings an ever clearer realisation of Life as spiritual, and a deepening consciousness of the presence of God. And to that degree all our human relationships take on spiritual meaning.

All things on their inner side relate to the kingdom of heaven.

How wonderful is the heart of man, an old mystic writes, that it can contain, within itself, the Infinite. In such a word we realise the mystery of life. Can the finite grasp the infinite? No, of course not! But is man altogether finite? Is there then that in him, a door opening within his consciousness, whereby the Infinite may enter, and the Heavenly find its rest, as perhaps it is meant—yes, meant to be our common experience, yours, mine?

Art Thou not in man the very principle of his real life? But can he know Thee, can he understand Thee? Ah, no! only infinitesimally. He can but grasp the hem of Thy garment. But Thou knowest man, and Thou dost understand his ways. For Thine eyes search inwardly, beholding into the heart. 'O God, Thou knowest it altogether!'

As the barriers of separation give way, and the selfhood surrenders unto Thee, in that degree will we surely know Thee, and understand Thy ways. For Thou dost enter then, to abide within the little house of the soul, for it is Thine, Thy very own to dwell in. For truly we are not our own; we are Thine.

The selfhood is forever erecting barriers, barriers that obscure the heavenly light, but they will not prevail against Thy word of truth, Thy spoken word in us.

Yes, they will perish before Thy word, spoken from Thy heart of Love.

Speak then Thy word in me, O my God. Free me from the bondage of the selfhood, from the obsession of the self-bound thought. Let my real life pass out, unhindered and untrammelled, into the open, there to abide in Thy Love.

Oh, to realise, to fully realise, the wonder of that Love, and the immediacy of Thy presence, which gives perfect freedom. To feel every moment filled with Thee, till Thy Love is as the Sun resplendent in the heavens, bearing down upon us with its healing ray!

The Life Divine is One and indivisible from eternity to eternity. And surely then the whole Universe of God's creation, expressing the full measure of His Providence, focalises in an eternal loving purpose upon each individual soul.

But God awaits our soul's response; He abides our spirit's awakening. Let that but take place, and there is an instant attunement, between our life and that Life, even though it be but at one little point, as it were, one little mustard seed of faith. It is sufficient for Love to work upon. It is a little postern gate leading into heaven itself. It is a little birth, like to His in Bethlehem; and when it happens all the angels sing!

From that moment our questing journey begins. Our heart begins to express itself in prayer; we begin to seek, that we may find; and to knock, that the door of Life may open to us. Yet at that moment also registers the heavenly Moment, when Love Divine steps down to meet us, to bless us and to heal us; and when and where Love journeys, Heaven journeys, too! Oh, when that day arrives, what joy, what exaltation, what vision, what a holy baptism of Love and Light! We could not seek Thee.

wert Thou not already seeking us, for Thou seest and respondest when still we are far from Thee.

But till that moment, Love is helpless, and her power is ineffective, for the simple reason that the soul is in slumber, under the shadow of the dread Upas tree of the selfhood, as William Blake depicts it, emitting its deadly opiate, dream-creating of sin and evil, and all that is opposite to what is Good and True. 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!' Christ in us is our heavenly wakefulness.

Be still, within His stillness, oh my soul; and in that Quiet, let the distractions, those 'little foxes that spoil the vines,' arising from thy self-centred thoughts and feelings, pass from thee. And let thine inner eye open, and in singleness of vision look unto Him who is all Truth and all Love. And thine heart, its restless pulse now still, find its rest in Him, within that Peace which surpasseth our human understanding.

As the blue Sky, tranquil and serene, beyond the restless clouds that range below, so is the Love of God with its infinite depths of Goodness, which we behold through that heavenly rift, framed like a Cross, through which Christ burst the heavy cloud of our mortality. So our lives may also be, rifts in the cloud, little apertures of faith and love through which God's light may shine.

Spirit of Goodness, quicken me; be active in this life of mine. Mould my being in Thy pattern. And, in my every part, let me be receptive to Thy Love, and responsive to Thy word.

Oh, that we might live more and more as within Thy Presence; every thought, every action bringing us nearer to Thee. And that we may realise that 'now are we the children of God,' and find ourselves at home in Thee, find here, even where we are, Thy heaven-world; here breathe of the sweet breath of the Breath of God—sweet and fragrant from the hills of God!

32 Spiritual Sincerity

To you who are tired and weary of the stiffness and insincerity of so much of our religious thought, to you who, journeying through a wilderness of doubt and difficulty, seeking truth, seeking freedom, freedom of spirit, you who might despair, were it not for the occasional shining of a light, not of this world; to you, Christ speaks, with a message direct to you. To you, because you are wanted. He needs your service in the spreading of His kingdom. It is not complete without you. So it is that when you turn to Him with all your heart, then Heaven is glad even to its very depths. And His word to us is that same fair message that fell from His lips when He walked among the simple people of Galilee, teaching them of the kingdom of God.

It was not a theology; it was a present reality of which He told. It was not a pointing into the future to some distant goal; it was a revealing of something very near and close at hand. What we need is but the awakening and quickening of that faculty in us which is able to discern that which is true. And this is the reason of His coming, to awaken that hidden faculty. It is that we may see and know and realise that Beautiful which is with us and about us at all times, if we but truly understand. He came to reveal the heavenly naturalness of the kingdom of God to which we belong, in the true, true life that is ours.

Wonderful beyond all knowing
Is the glory of the earth,
Precious gift of Love's bestowing,
But more wonderful man's birth!
For the air of Heaven's about us,
And the music of the spheres,
As an aureole surrounds us,
Golden through our human years.

Through our faith shines the magic of that awakening. Faith is not a blind leap into the darkness. It is the trust of a purer perception, seeing into the Invisible. It is our praiseful realisation of the divinely true. And so it was that Jesus said, that if you have it, the veriest grain of it, as it were but equal to a little mustard seed, you would be able to say to this mountain of trouble in front of you, blinding heaven from your view, Be thou removed! and before your eyes it would overturn and disappear. •

The doors of the Kingdom are open for us to enter in, He tells us today as in His own day, with that same fresh invitation. And there we enter—no strange place, but Home, more so than anything we have ever known before—‘our true, our heavenly home,’ as Brother James would have put it. It is our home of Fellowship, one with another, which the Church is also meant to be. Yes, it is meant to be the standing glowing witness of Christ in the midst. And in one of these near days His word will come upon us all with renewing power.

Is it not more than time to outwardly express that fellowship we feel inwardly? Fellowship, the real thing, is heaven itself. On that ground, once we have been touched by the wand of Love, are we not all brothers and sisters and lovers one of another?

Thou, who art Love to all eternity; dwell Thou in me, and I in Thee! Enable my growth in Thee, with enriching love and understanding. Thou art the tender compassion of the loving heart. Loving Thee, I love my brother.

There are no forfeits in the Love of God—in that Love which is the same from eternity to eternity!

Make this life wholly Thine; use Thou me fully! Let my heart find freedom in Thy Love. And so that I may be responsive and obedient to Thy whispered word.

Thou sayest, Be thou very courageous! For Thou art our strength. Let us behold Thee, perceivingly; yea, with expectancy, in and through our every experience.

May we not then catch Thy message, coming to us from everywhere. For Thou art everywhere. Truly where-soe'er we look, our eyes should behold Thee!

Thy voice be upon mine ears, Thy hand ever upon my heart; that I may apprehend Thee, 'know Thee as I am known,' commune with Thee in all my being, in the freedom of Thy Love, Thy Love 'which faileth never.'

'There is yet more light and truth to break forth from His word,' and I think the time is not far distant when the King—Christ, our King—will sound a bugle call. 'Come!' He appeals to all who are young in spirit, 'Come, it is time for a great advance, even unto the bringing in of the Kingdom. He calls not for our intellectual assent, but for the loyalty of our love and faith, that which can be common to all, and will draw all people together. No theological dogma is needful when we believe in the living Christ. He calls for our self-surrendering service. And there is a deep longing for it in the heart of everyone.

In the days to come every little church or grouping of consecrated people will be a very bee-hive of such service.

The Church in general does not advance such service. Its prayer and praise, its worship, is not acceptable to God, unless it issues in a spiritual quickening made manifest in such Christian service. Many suffer actual physical ill-health because such opportunity to serve is withheld from them.

Let us have the free air of Heaven in our faces, and the light of Christ shining in our hearts.

33 Heavenly Nearness

WHEN we speak of the Divine Immanence we think of God's Presence which is everywhere. The more we lovingly contemplate it, the more it will help us on our way.

When we dwell on the thought of God's Presence or Immanence, we do not contemplate it like unto, shall we say, the diffusion of a substance spreading everywhere, in the manner, to our thinking, of fog or mist, though without visibility. These are material substances, and that is why they diffuse. But God's presence is not material.

It is nearer to the truth to think of God's presence as pervasive, but far, far more wonderfully so, even as the light and the air are pervasive. We sometimes speak of the diffusion of light, but that is a relative expression.

Of light, we may say that it integrates into oneness everywhere. It is not divisible. At every point it is in immediate relationship to its Source. It is the same light everywhere shining. It is the nearest of all that is manifest to the Divine. So near that it is spoken of sometimes as the vesture of the Deity. It corresponds outwardly so closely to our realisation of God as at once immanent and transcendent. It is the source of our nature-life and of our physical well-being, even as God is the Fount of our spiritual life and our complete well-being.

We say, therefore, that God is Light, but it is with a deeper reason still, and in a truer way. For nature-radiance has its essential origin in that supernal Light, and manifests its glory. And so the face of God is seen in all things beautiful.

'Light, rare, ineffable, lighting the very light': so Walt Whitman speaks of the light of the Divine Presence in its revealing. And quite truly so, for it is indeed Light to that other light. But the inspired Scripture uses another word to equate with it, and that word is Love. For Love is Light in the supremest sense of all. 'God is Light', we read, 'and in Him is no darkness at all.' Likewise we read that 'God is Love.' And Love is truly the radiance of the soul. It is the inner counterpart of the sweet sunshine that makes all living things rejoice.

We are familiar with the expression, 'the light of truth'. But never can we truly discern except we look through the eyes of Love. Love makes possible the central contact of God with all His children. St. Augustine has a word to the effect that

'God is That whose centre is everywhere, but whose circumference is nowhere.' In other words, God is central to all His creation. Our understanding of this is the measure of our understanding of the meaning of the Divine Immanence. Interiorly we have a central contact. And, as Jesus taught, the Kingdom of Heaven is within you. And, unto us, His children, God, as Love, is central to our very being.

Of that immanent Life and Being, it is a universal loving tenderness toward all, in very truth and reality. And the meaning reveals wherever we see love to Love responding.

God seeks to win this response in the hearts of all His children, till at length, and how joyously, they can affirm that 'now are we the children of God!' And with what a sureness will they realise how all things must work together for good to those whose hearts are attuned to the love of God. Then should not our lives become one glorious song of praise? And, with the saints of old who could praise God amid their every experience and circumstance—amid each present situation, and each experience, the nature of which we may not fully understand, we may in that love-light, that shining faith, do likewise, and thereby win its heavenly meaning. In this way, not in subservience, but in faithful acceptance of all things as they hap, we co-operate with Him. And thereby His purpose is enabled to unfold, and it will be as a radiance breaking through, more and more. In the Divine Reality—and there is no other—is 'our refuge and strength, and our very *present* help.' And therein all is well and very well!

O that every moment of our life might be God-filled!
Let us live joyously in Thee, who art giving of Thyself to us for ever and ever. Apart from Thee we have no real life at all.

Without Thee, how poor and impoverished our life becomes. Let the windows of our soul become clean and transparent. Let Thy cleansing stream make us clean in every part. Free the channels of our being from every impediment and obstruction. Rise in us, shine through us; mould our lives in the beauty of Thy perfect Love.

Let my outward seeing become one with my inward sight, and my inward sight at one with Thy sight in me; so through my every sense—these avenues of my seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, knowing—be Thou, Soul of my soul, Light of my light, manifest in me.

34 In the Reality

IN the Reality, in the true substance of things, all is well, and very well. We mean, of course, the Divine Reality, in which truly we 'live and move and have our being'.

That which clutches upon us as evil in our experience, and fixes itself to our outward perceiving as real, will prove itself but as a passing shadow, as slowly but surely it dissolves away before that spreading radiance from within, our growing realisation of the presence of God. The experience of evil will hold no longer than it can be purposeful and disciplinary. But our right attitude makes a bridge of grace, and greatly shortens that time. In our fear we say it is real; but in our looking into God, and the heavenly Perfect, ever near and present, we are able to deny its reality. In the light of God, illumining the soul, we realise the falsity of sin and evil.

We may be sure of this, that in this realisation there is power. And the experience of evil, though outwardly it may seem to linger, is at that moment broken, and no longer to be feared. It remains in visibility only until the light of faith dissolve the shadow of our seeing, and we are able to turn to God with the praise-prayer on our lips that His will of blessing is now accomplished. When we pray, Hallowed be Thy Name (holy and perfect is Thy revealing) a flood of holy light should shine upon our way.

Let us say that to realise the presence of God is not simply a mental process. The mind has its part in it, but the heart a greater part. It is made up of love and faith and self-surrender.

Whate'er I do, let it be unto Thee, that all my activities may be linked together in prayer. Let me realise that nothing is meaningless, but that everything in its action or reaction strikes down into the reality of things. The outward and material is symbolic of the inward and the spiritual.

Give us strength and grace to fulfil all the true resolves which lie deep in our heart. Give us Vision, and Love to make the vision real.

In this outward life of ours, let us behold the inward and the spiritual. Let us view all things in a sacramental light. In our resting hours, let us find an inner quiet, wherein faith and love are present, with renewing power; when we dress, let us feel that we are girding ourselves with the whole armour of God, of which the apostle writes. When we take our meals, at the same time let it be a partaking of spiritual refreshment. In our daily work let us inwardly be giving of ourselves in His service. Yes, in the action, let us take our orders as from Him.

In our cleansing of ourselves with water, let us feel the cleansing of the Spirit, too, that we are being made clean inwardly. So let the spiritual affirm and express through our every action, so that living in the body we may be actively living in the spirit too.

With every breath we breathe let there be a corresponding soul-breath of Love. So let the illusion of separateness become less and less, and the spiritual reality more and more. Till at length we come to see directly in His Light, and to love directly in His Love.

Cleanse Thou our being thoroughly, and heal us within and without, that we be instantly responsive to Thy Love and Goodness—finding freedom so from the bondage of the separation of our life apart from Thee, so Love may rule supreme within.

In our fear we say of evil that it is real, and we think it is enduring, and we may be desperately afraid. But as we believe, looking through the appearance, and into God, in faith and

trust, then we are enabled to relax inwardly, and open ourselves, in our whole being, to the Love of God, desiring only that His good and perfect Will be accomplished. This is our part, and all that God asks of us. He does the rest, and it is He that works the miracle—by His grace.

Man of himself confuses the issue—he so often does—by his own self-righteousness—his own self-willing and self-thinking—yet, in this way he loses his bearings completely. Perhaps it is for this reason that our world has gone astray. The further he presses on in this manner the more hopelessly lost he becomes. Nor is there any ground for hope until, like the poor Prodigal, he takes himself to task, and, with a penitent heart, begins to retrace his steps. For, from the human side, there is no way out. The outward world of our experience is like unto a labyrinth of confused thought, with innumerable broken ends, and entanglements of evil. Therefore we require a Saviour to seek us out and rescue us from such an impossible and hopeless situation. Christ came down from heaven to win us back to heaven and God.

In the mystery of Love, in Christ, the grace of God is made divinely manifest, with redemptive power, redirecting our errant ways to heavenly issues, transforming evil into good, and leading our footsteps into the way of peace.

O Love of God, flow through our being; O Light of God, shine in our seeing; make of our lives Thy very own.

35 Seedtime and Harvest

SEEDTIME and harvest: that is the rhythm of life spoken of at the beginning, the rhythm of the Divine providence. And it has reference, not merely to the natural, but to the spiritual order of things.

Jesus brings this to mind in His first great parable of the Kingdom. How like unto the natural is the spiritual, if only you have eyes to see, He might have said. In the beginning our heavenly Father sows the seed; in the end He reaps the harvest of that which He has sown.

There are many different seeds that we may sow in our gardens; a great variety to choose from, though in the outer appearance generally one is not very different from another, and some can easily be confused with others. But in the growth the difference manifests more and more. It is in the inner principle. For such is the real life; the outer seed is but the little casket that contains it.

In the Divine Providence what a variety there is to our use and delight, for which reason we should never cease from praising God for all His goodness: the seed of beautiful things, yielding so precious a harvest, in flowers and fruit, in herbs and vegetables. And each is after its kind, in the divine ordering, in God's wisdom, in God's Love. 'And what of man, that Thou art mindful of him?' and that he should have kinship with the angelic and the heavenly? For the principle within him, the creative impress, is, the scripture avers, the divine central impress itself, the blue-print of his true being in God's image and likeness. 'In the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.' The Scripture tells of it as the fulfilling act of God's creation—the coming of the Divine humanity. It is God's ultimate revealing of Himself. Then the Seventh Day will unfold, the Sabbath of God, the Great Peace, the Universal Harmony.

Our resurrection life is our human life coming to its pure fruition. What it is, we behold in the face of Jesus Christ, It is our life in Christ, His growth within our own. Yet it is only when we become like unto Him that we will truly behold Him as He is. 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' This, then, is the true life of man: it is no other than the life of God in him. It is spoken of as the divine seed, the living principle within him. There is, as

William Law expresses it, no other salvation than this: the life of God in the soul.

Our resurrection life is no other than God's Word, implanted in us, coming at length to its divine issue, its heavenly fruition. It is not, nor does the scripture say that it is, the re-emergence of our mortal body. For the mortal body perishes, like the little material seed-case containing the germinal life of the fruit or herb or flower, which we plant in the soil. It breaks up or disintegrates, so that the living principle is freed to unfold and grow into the beautiful form that is meant, revealing the meaning of its growth. This is its resurrection body. It is in this way that St. Paul speaks of resurrection in a very wonderful passage.

He begins by remarking that there are some who say, 'how can the dead possibly be raised?' For, looking on a corrupting body, they see in it a flat denial of such a belief. You think you die, and that is the end. But what of the seed that you plant in the ground? It rots and disappears as far as the outer frame is concerned. It dies to all appearance. But, does it really? And, do *you*, really? Perhaps it proves that there is no such thing as death, really! That nothing really dies, but only in the appearance!

Do you not understand that the seed you sow in the ground does not germinate unless it first rot and die in the form in which you knew it. That form disappears, but something new takes its place. This new and living body grows and grows, inconceivably different. To every seed there is a glorious body which God hath prepared. The beautiful growth, how different from the seed that is sown!

The flesh and blood body cannot step into the kingdom of God, nor that which is corruptible become incorruptible. But listen to God's wonderful secret: we shall all be transformed and find ourselves clothed in a new body, incorruptible and immortal. Then truly 'death is swallowed up in victory!'

Without Thee, how poor my life would be! Let the windows of my soul become clean and transparent. O Love, cleanse Thou my being through. Make free from

obstruction every little channel of grace within. Rise Thou in me, shine Thou through me. Mould this life into the pattern of Thy loveliness, till all that is in me be spelt in Thy Name. Let my outer seeing be one with my inward sight, and my inward sight be one with Thy sight in me. So, with my every faculty, let the inner be reflected in the outer, and be Thou, Soul of my soul, Light of my light, manifest in me.

Apart from Thee we have no real life at all. But every moment may be God-filled. We have not lived fully as yet. How far from it! Henceforward let us live in Thee more and more, who givest us of Thine own Self: and Who dost never cease from giving of Thyself unto Thy children, for ever and ever!

36 Lo, I am with You

CHRIST emerged out of the tomb of the 'past' that He might be present with us always. 'Lo, I am with you always.' He said, 'even unto the end of the world.' And His words fall sweet and fresh to us today, not as from the past, but in the very present that we know. There is no time-element in the life of God. And we, as His children, may breathe the eternal Breath and find in it our life and health and good. That inner breathing is the pulse of our communion with God, and of our realisation of His presence. We look upon God in the face of Jesus Christ, Life interpreted in the language of Love. Therein is to be found the meaning beyond all other meaning.

More than we know or realise may He be present in the sweet radiance of His ascended life, becoming in us, each one, the Jesus-life, unfolding in *our* being, as we are one in Him, and not our own.

His word falls upon us, sweet and fresh, bringing new vision, and a richer, deeper understanding of life and its meaning.

Christ opens for us the heavenly gates. He came as Conqueror, severing the binding barrier holding man's spirit captive. He broke and overcame the power of darkness, with its earthward, material, downward, gravitational pull, emerging free from it, into the freedom of God and Heaven—and by that same power, enabling the riving of the bonds in us, and our ascending as He ascended, or (in a deep, true, wonderful way beyond our human understanding) *in* His ascension, free and emancipate in the Life of God, in Whom, henceforward, as, in the deepest sense, always, 'we live and move and have our being.'

Amid these rather tired and tiring days His word comes to us, 'Come ye apart into a desert place, away from the outer turmoil, and rest awhile.' Let us become still from ourselves, and in ourselves, still from our customary thought, and the outer claims that hold us, and let us *listen*. Let our hearts be open, that we may heed His voice, and hear, and as we hear, respond to, His word, His freeing word, speaking into us. 'When thou standest still from thine own willing and thinking,' wrote Jacob Boehme, 'thou mayst hear the unspeakable words of God.' The Word of God is spoken in the ever-Present, and that Word is interpreted, and comes to us through the lips of Christ, and in His life and teaching—He Who was and is that Word incarnate, and Who was and is the Love of God incarnate.

In Him, becoming emancipate from ourselves, and so made free: *that* is what He would have us be! All is gifted to us; nought have we of our own. William Blake wrote a charming little quatrain which runs as follows:

'He who bends to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sun-rise.'

What we clutch at for ourselves does not enhance our life, but the very opposite. It is the little 'ego' in us that plays the mischief. The 'I and me and mine' in us, as the writer of the 'Theologia Germanica' tells us, is the very devil.

'All that in Adam fell and died,' we read in that wonderful little book, 'was raised again and made alive in Christ, and all that rose up and was made alive in Adam, fell and died in Christ. "But what was that?" I answer, "true obedience and disobedience". "But what is true obedience?" I answer, "that a man should so stand free, being quit of (or liberated from) himself, that is, of his I, and Me, and Self, and Mine, and the like, that in all things he should no more seek and regard himself." '

Let us become free from possessiveness. As we clutch at things possessively, draw to ourselves what is not truly our own, the living principle falls dead at our feet.

Nothing worth have we, apart from Thee. We need Love's constant nourishment. We come to Thee for sustenance, and healing, for inspiration and for guidance. Enable us to do a little good each day. Let us seek to bless all whom we meet. Cleanse us from egoism and possessiveness, that Love may work unhindered, and our lives be perfect in Thy service.

Let us say, Now is the best and greatest moment, *God's* moment. With my every breath, let me breathe in Thy Love—for the Breath of Love is the Breath of God; and so let my natural breathing be one with the in-breathing of the Spirit, that deeper Breath, in me.

Nought that I hold is mine own. Help me never to appropriate, that I may go forward in freedom, that day by day, and moment by moment, I may receive from Thy Hand, and give richly through Thy Loving Hand being outstretched in me. All that I have, it is Thine to be used, and in Thy service. Especially let my inner life be Thine, my thoughts, my feelings, my actions be Thine!

Thou art never far from us, but we may be far apart from Thee. Quicken our perceptions that we may realise

our true life and being, our life in Thee, with Thy Goodness enfolding us: and that we are, even now, within Thy world, Thy good World, wherein Thou dwellest! For where God *is*, there *is* heaven. Free our hearts from every falsity, in feeling and in thought, that ever we may be true to Thee, and *loving*, in Thy Love.

If in our Christian society there was a surrender of personal possessiveness, the winds of God would awaken, and the Breath of Heaven would sweep through, and the Church of God would fling open wide all her windows and doors, and she would tread on strong new ground, and reveal in herself what she is meant to be—with her lips framing a gracious, heavenly message fresh and new. And on her banner this slogan written, 'The Church of God is the Home of the people!'

37 No Separation

IN our normal life and experience the conscious and sub-conscious part of us are not really separate, but conjoin, in the same way, to use a simile, as that part of an iceberg which we would see above the water level conjoins with the vaster hidden bulk of it that is below. So the conscious life merges into the vaster hidden sub-conscious life below the surface. Our conscious life is, therefore, naturally influenced, and to a very considerable extent motivated by the hidden sub-conscious. The latter is like unto a store-house, in which is gathered up the fruits of all our experience anterior to the present living moment. And our present normal consciousness may be said to epitomise all that has gone before.

All the influences that have played upon us have their share in this inheritance of good and ill.

But in contrast to the sub-conscious, there is what we may describe as the super-conscious, to which our lives relate and, in differing degrees, are open to on the upper side. Where it touches, it touches us redemptively. It is a central influence, awakening and quickening into life, life immediate and direct, that condition half-awake and half-asleep, which may be said to be the normal human state, which we may define as existence. For apart from the Spirit, that breathing in him of the super-conscious, man cannot be said really to live. The spiritual is the live-breath in him, the breath of the Present and Eternal.

Of the super-conscious, the scriptures are eloquent on every page. It is a central influence, therefore primary and fundamental. And it precedes all else. It is the speaking Word of God, the living word of Life. It is original to the Divine Creation. In the Beginning was, and is, the Logos, the Word. For it ever *is*! By it, all that truly is hath come into being; and, without It, nothing at all, in the reality. In its forth-going, it is the eternal mirror of the Heart of God, wherein all things appear in their true likeness—in their spirit-truth—substantial, not transitory.

It is the Divine *fiat*, 'Let there be light!' shining into the darkness, the formless chaos of existence. It is the Will of God expressing, to fulfil the heavenly Purpose. It will not fail, nor return void or empty. But 'it will accomplish that which God please,' making manifest His own creation.

It is this Word, the influence of the Super-conscious, from the Deep speaking, that calls to the deep within us—with appeal of the highest and the truest—winning our heart's response. 'We needs must love the Highest when we see it'—that is, with our inner vision. We feel toward God; which feeling within us is the call of the Super-conscious. So we go forth into the Unknown, 'believing where we cannot see.' And it is from this questing that all that which is worth while in our human life and experience has come about. For God responds to our every true and faithful action by a revealing of Himself. And in Christ we may say that it is perfected.

This journey into the Unknown, 'believing where we cannot see,' may be compared to the famous voyage of Columbus, as he set off from Spain, boldly steering westward, on and on and on, cutting through the Vast of waters, uncharted and unknown to man before, believing that in so doing he would curve the world and come to India, that glittering land of treasure. He did not reach India, but he came to and discovered America. What he set out to achieve was far surpassed by what he discovered.

Like unto this is our interior journey God-wards and heaven-wards, led on by faith, motivated in self-surrender, till we reach at length the paradisaal shore, the Land of Heart's Desire, its treasure surpassing our greatest expectancy. 'As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'

Every step forward of faith is also one of testing. As we press heavenwards—in our truth-seeking toward that which is Real, within us and about us, there is ever the backward pull of the sub-conscious, holding us by innumerable little connecting strands to the Race-mind, in its gradual evolution, its slow groping upward. Our attaining, and in it our Christ service is never for and unto ourselves alone, but for the blessing and enlargement of the greater life around.

Is it nothing, the people we meet with day by day? The contact, slight as it may be, is it of no significance? Or have we something to convey, a word spoken in the silence, or maybe even to receive? Is there not some virtue, some quality that we may shed, even as a flower sheds its perfume? As we receive, should there not also be a giving forth, each day and each moment of the day?

Let us do nothing meaningless, but be ourselves present in the action. May everything that comes to me show itself, as indeed it is, full of meaning for me now.

Is the dull, uninteresting, apparently meaningless work, after all really without meaning? Or is it purposeful in a hidden way, that we may the more fall back upon God, in a pure humility, accepting gladly of the same, because of the unseen meaning, until a door opens and we see our way?

38 Our True Beholding

LET us realise that God is All and in All, the One Real Life interpenetrating everywhere. Let our hearts and minds open to that conception with adoration. And let us look believingly against everything to the contrary. Indeed, that true beholding is central to our faith. It is because of that that we are faithful. And by our faith that which we believe is brought into expression. And so it is that by our growing realisation of the One pure Life, infinitely good, and infinitely perfect, Whose nature and being we cannot express in terms other than Love, implying perfection of Goodness, it is as Light breaking through the darkness and the shadow. And it is like unto a heavenly Day-Dawn, even as the Scriptures describe it—the coming of Light, more Light, before which the darkness and shadow of evil and ignorance draws back, until there is no more shadow, no more darkness, and the tears will be wiped from every eye, and heaven opens and rests in its sweetness and immediacy in the very life that we know.

That which we look into as something which must be, and therefore will take place in the very nature of things, faith affirms that it is true in the present, and so it is—that is, God's *Present*, the ever-present, to which there is neither past nor future, for the time-element does not enter into it at all. Thus it is that the Divine Perfection, the Heavenly Loveliness is divinely immanent, immediate and instant at every point in time and place.

And thus it is that Heaven is knocking at our doors. And thus it was that Christ conveyed the greatest word that has ever fallen from human lips, 'verily, the kingdom of heaven is within you,' and that, if we but understood, it is at our doors. Let our inner looking ever be to that great and heavenly truth—seek ye first the kingdom of God and its rightness—and all the rest, all that is good and lovely will come about.

Christ came to reveal the sacredness of life, life in the very present. All life is sacred when we see it truly. And the impress of heaven is upon it. Where He enters, heaven enters too.

Let us consider that our own life is sacred, every part of it. Body, soul, spirit held in the oneness of that realisation! Who is to say what is the more sacred, or the greater or the lesser, where there is that oneness indivisible? The body is the soul's garmenting, and the soul is the lamp of the Spirit. And surely through that realisation there is an ever cleansing motion, till only His light is seen, and only His presence known.

The personal life then that we know, is it not God's temple, His sacred shrine? In the little, and in the greater, every part of it sacred and consecrate, and kept pure and inviolate, that it may be instrument to His revealing! Oh, that through our inner communion, and the self-surrender of our faithful channelling, we might convey to others something of the loveliness of God!

Let us realise that Now may be the best moment of our life, and Here the best place. Here and Now, let us say, is best for me, at this moment, this place, and unto His heavenly purpose to be wrought in me. Each moment comes to me borne on wings straight from Thee! It bears a message direct to me, and carries my answer back to Thee!

Oh, that we might behold, through the film of the senses, into His Light and Truth—the Beautiful and Heavenly truly within and all around—that at His touch the scales of the shadow-world may fall from our vision and that we may truly see!

O Love of God, possess this life of mine. Enable me to behold Thee in my fellows, and beholding, minister to Thee, confined and cabined in our human life—thee, weary, sick, or imprisoned, for Thou journeyest with us every step of the way.

Eager to serve others, let us not neglect those who are most near and dear. Let richest blessing be upon them, Thy sweet influence enfold them, and our tender love go out to them without ceasing.

Help us, that we put our best into every moment, patient, eager, watchful, receptive, joyous—instant in obedience, alert to Thy monition, submitting our wills to Thine.

Yet how slow of heart are we! Help us that we miss no opportunity of service; that we hold not back the virtue of Thy love in us, Thy blessing, Thy healing power.

An infinite caringness broods over all being at all times, and everywhere. Nought is there in Life outside the range of that wisdom and that love.

‘Consider the lilies, *how* that grow, they do not toil, nor (of themselves weave or) spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his splendour was not arrayed like one of these.’

The flowers are non-resistant to the heavenly Craftsman, and so they unfold unto a loveliness of perfection to which man by his strain and self-effort can never attain. ‘Yet if your heavenly Father so clothe the flower of the field, will He not much more clothe you, O ye of *little* faith.’ That which happens to the flower, through its non-resistant openness to the spirit of Life, the same will happen to man, only more wonderfully so, according as, through faith, he becomes open and responsive to the universal Goodness. This is becoming in tune with the Infinite; the heart of man becoming open to the beating of the Heart of God: love to Love responding. To the call from the heart of man there is an answering Goodness right at hand. An open, simple, responsive, believing, child-like faith: that makes the channel for the heavenly loveliness to enter in.

39 Love Never Faileth

'LOVE never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.'

'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. And the peace of God shall be with you.'

The pure elements in our life are quiet and true and eternal; they are of heavenly origin. They are the source of all that is truly beautiful. They make the shining vesture of the presence of God. The other elements are in a manner their opposite, that is, in the appearance of things. Yet, on their own level, they are in process of becoming and, therefore, are tending to a purposeful issue. And that purpose will be fulfilled when, at length, through the influence of a higher control, they draw in oneness together. But till that takes place their action is restless and unpredictable. They yield themselves to an antagonistic motion, becoming instrument to the same; and the effect is antipathetic, and we call it evil. We may conjecture that it is a fermenting process, but with the Divine Wisdom, that looks before and after, shall we say, supervising the issue?

We speak of the Divine Stillness, but, in contrast to that, Evil is an unceasing restlessness. Not for a single moment's pause could evil find quiet anchorage or stillness. For at that very instant will it dissolve into its own nothingness. It would shrivel away before the divine Word spoken in the stillness, 'I Am.'

God fills every pause, every moment of true quiet at all times, with His Presence. Instantly will we find He is there, for He is always present in the world of His creation, and in truth there is God and God only. There is no void in life at all.

The purpose of our life here is to bring heaven into manifestation. Unseen, unfelt, unknown, yet working through all things, and in and through our own being, is that Life Divine in its deep flowing. Our awareness is in the measure in which we become inwardly quiet and at leisure from ourselves, staying the wheel of our restless errant imagination, the motion or swing of the ego away from God, weaving shadows all the time, and in this process building up that dark world and broken experience which must be ours, except we are lifted out of it by walking with God.

For we draw near to Love by loving, to Truth by being true. And unto His Presence by opening the doors of our hearts for Him to enter.

As I am loving, as I am true, and my heart is kind, I know that I am inwardly receiving from that Source of good, without which I would be empty indeed.

It is not meant that we should be like unto phantoms in a world of shadows, but alive with joy amid the reality of God's beautiful world. Our Lord had that joyous consciousness, and He came that we might have it, too. God rejoiced in Him, and God rejoices in us when we are like Him. His disciples witnessed it, and longed for it. Incredible to them, they witnessed it at its very highest, when they might have expected its opposite, when, fearing, they beheld Evil couchant, ready to spring on Him and destroy Him. But even at that very moment His wish was that they might share in His Joy, that it might be in them, and remain in them, so that their joy 'might be full.' And they, listening to His words, longed with a great longing to receive, and to know and feel that joy. For it was the joy of the deathless life. It is the very joy of God in His creation. Then the little personal element or ego hastes away, swept aside by the wave of Life indeed that comes surging in.

All life tells of God, if we have eyes to see, and ears to hear.

God can use our difficult experiences to His high ends, once we turn to Him with all our hearts.

God loves us, each one of us, and it is up to us to respond to that Love, and first of all in the deep desire of our hearts.

It is the throb of that deeper love in the midst of our lesser love that is the cause of our spirit's unrest—an unrest that will never cease until Him we find.

The measure of our real experience is the measure of the heart and not the brain.

Let your seeking be simple and childlike and believing, and cease from mentally puzzling over things beyond your knowledge. The real meanings will slip in, and quietly unfold to you in a far better way, at the right moment for you, when you are ready.

If you yourself are wrong—that is, if your life is not pointed truly, no amount of so-called development can put you right.

The important thing is not whether we understand, but whether we are true. It is from that living point in us that we truly receive.

40 Infinite Caringness

'Most near, most near!

*Childwise, in simple faith, we touch Thee and commune;
And our eyes open unto that which is.*

*Wondering, we find we are even now truly in the
Place we have longed for!*

*In Thy Presence, where we are, we feel and know Thy
Love and Joy and Peace!*

THERE is an infinite Caringness. Nothing is outside the range of His Wisdom and His Love. The perfection of God is everywhere. It holds us and enfolds us. If God is infinite, and God is All, our life, the real life that is within us, is held and enfolded within that All. His Perfection is, therefore, not far from us; and indeed is within us, even as Jesus said. 'The kingdom of heaven is within you,' were His very words.

When we look into the heavens above, we behold into the Divine Perfection; and, as we tread this beautiful earth, we find it at our feet. And oh! that we might look beholdingly, and find it in one another! It is surely nestling there, and we will surely find it, if we look lovingly enough!

Is not the Divine Artist ever plying His wonderful craft? He bends lovingly over each little flower, and to His kiss it responds in beauty and in sweetness. He pencils the wing of the little butterfly, and chisels the delicate beauty of the crystal and the little snowflake. And the joy of it all expresses in our little English songbirds. On all hands are evidences of creative beauty and perfection. And in man—in each one of us—that same beauty and perfection resides. Every living thing leaps up to answer the call of God within them—in the Springtime; and everywhere there is beauty and sweetness and song. But what of man, to whom Christ opens the door of a heavenly Springtide? Alas! that man is so heedless, or is it that he is blind or deaf? Perhaps it is so with us all, until the Master draw near, and touch our eyes and our ears with His healing touch, and we see and we hear—Light, heavenly light, shining through, and God's Love speaking into our heart. And we hear and heed His call, and like old Bartimaeus, we follow.

He has called, and we leap to answer, for the meaning has come home to us, and it fills our universe with its radiance. And in the realisation of its full significance, our heart responds:

'Lo, I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.'

I have a work to do, a problem to face. In the midst of the work, in the heart of the problem, I will find the answer that I need, the *open sesame* to my soul. If I have the grace to speak that word, His word of love and life in me, then will I come face to face with Him I love, my Master and my Friend.

The light of Thy seeing, in our seeing, looks out in loving concern toward all our brethren. O let Thy Love be interwoven in our consciousness.

Life of my life, fulfil in me the freedom of Thy Love. Beholding Thee in every one, enable me to serve Thee in my brother.

Above all else I would be sincere; but beyond sincerity I would have Thy Light in me aflame; so I may love in Thy loving, eternal Lover!

Let Thy Peace in me be as a fountain of cooling water that will have healing qualities for fevered souls.

The real essential battlefield is always in the heart itself. It is the victory over ourselves, over the evil within, which alone enables us to gain any real victory over the evil without.

'You are bidden to fight with your own selves, with your own desires, with your own affections, with your own reason, and with your own will,' wrote John Everard. 'If you would find your enemies, never look without . . . You must expect to fight a great battle.'

We are adjured by a great father of the Church, to 'stand firm like an anvil under the blows of a hammer, and to be 'strong as an athlete of God'; for 'it is part of a great athlete to receive blows and to conquer.'

Enable us to turn from the ways and thoughts of men to Thee, and, from within Thy Presence, look into the infinite of Thy Love. So let us receive Thy message in its purity. Thou hast more to teach us than all the wisdom and learning of men. Enable us to receive of Thy word direct, even as we journey, putting aside from us all mere opinions and prejudices, so Thy motive in us may shine clear, and as a pure and holy light.

Let Thy Temple of Beauty, Truth and Love, self-transcending, arise in our midst—filled with Thy living Presence—wherein we may truly worship—beholding from it Thy heaven of Love—seeing our brother-man, our sister-woman, yea, all our fellows within a spiritual light—in recognition that we are spiritual beings within a spiritual world, for that all life is spiritual. So do we learn when we enter the precincts of God's Temple.

Open mine eyes that I may see,
Open my ears that I may hear,
Open my heart to understand;
Let me be receptive and open to Thy Love, so
I may express Thee, and my love be Thy love,
and Thy way my way.
'O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of Thine,
And our inmost being fill.'

41 The Life of the Spirit

WE are all members of Thy Body, and partake of Thy Spirit. And our true prayer from our heart arising is an impulse straight from Thee. We pray to Thee, and Thou dost respond in the *when* and *where* of our circumstance that is needful. And truly such prayer passes unto its fulfilment.

Let the troubled ones cease to mourn, for there is Joy awaiting; let the restless hearts be still, for the Day of the Great Peace dawns. Let us not doubt, for our unbelief restricts Love's working. Love opens the door unto the richness of the Heart of God.

Each moment, ere it passes, whispers to my soul the Name of God. Shall I not therefore bend in adoration? And shall I not avoid all that is unworthy?

There is no moment when I may not say, Now may I draw near to God, in this very time and place, in the very thing I am striving to do, touch the highest, realise the truest, commune with the divinest!

As a Star, shine Thou through all my ways! Life of my life, fulfil in me the freedom of Thy Love, *that* Love so wonderful that would express Itself in me, so lovingly kind, so tenderly compassionate.

Thou speakest in me: Give Me opportunity to reveal Myself in thee. Give Me freedom, in thy life, in thy circumstance, by emptying thyself of thyself—the egoism, the unreality, the falsity. So wilt thou pass out from the wilderness of the poverty of thy life apart from Me, and come to the paradise of My Love indeed, and to the richness of the nearness of My Presence.

Every moment would I give of myself, in surrender of the self, passing evermore from out the cabined selfhood into the freedom of Thy Love!

As a little child I would receive all my good from Thee, and daily partake of the nourishing of Thy hidden manna.

Prepare me, Thou, and gird me that I may go forth in Thy truth, yea, in Thy Spirit, to love, to bless and to heal, giving fully of myself. So will Thy Love outpour in me, as a warm stream through the wound in my heart. For there is the selfhood slain, enabling the pulsing of Thy Love in me, in my body and in my spirit.

Sustained in Thee, from my true place in life I can never fall. And my true place, is it not here and now? Yes, it may and should be so. Or, on the other hand it may not be so. Dwelling in Thee, in realisation of Thy presence, it *is* so. But absent from Thee, it is not so, nor will we find our true place until we find Thee.

Henceforth let us seek Thy good will in everything, so that we journey rightly, and in true relationship with all our fellows. Seeing the moment's duty, with our whole power let us accomplish it. Let us love, seeking no return, bearing patiently with others, having a kind word for all.

Today in our great need we come to Thee! Oh, raise up men and women filled with a true and burning message straight from Thee, a renewing life-giving message; men and women fired by Thee, in love of Thee, and in their hearts a great compassion.

Open mine eyes to that pureness of vision that I may see—Thee; open mine ears that I may hear—Thy voice, Thy living word of life; open my heart to receive and to understand—Thy truth, the 'truth that maketh free'. Let me be receptive to Thy love outpouring, that I, too, may be love. So enable me to dwell spontaneously in simple consciousness of the true, true world, within and over all, the kingdom of Love, wherein is no disharmony, but which is wholly in accord with Itself, with no cleavage breaking through. And to which we belong in our perfect, our spiritual being. For Thy World, spiritual and real, is the revealing of Thy love-life, perfect from the beginning. As it was then, so is it now and ever shall be!

Let us pray that in our lives we may be enabled to draw aside the curtain, even if but a little, revealing to others something of the richness and wonder of the Goodness and Love of God! It is beyond all knowledge. 'For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, all that the Father hath in store for them that love Him.' If we but turn to God in simple faith, oh, then how great is His salvation!

Nearer than we are to ourselves is the heaven of God's love and goodness, and of His presence, if we may but understand. Yesterday it was so, today it is so; tomorrow it still will be the same, and so it is for ever and ever.

Through our human experience a gracious Voice is sounding, unto all the children of men: 'Come unto Me all ye that travail, and I will refresh you.'

42 The Spirit of Kindness

How wise it is when we can keep our minds free from the spirit of unkindness, one toward another, of criticising and of judging one another, and especially of that unhappy frame of mind that would confess a brother's or a sister's sins, as if by so doing one might absolve one's own. If it were in a confession box it would perhaps not matter very much, but it is too often where not even one whisper should be said. We give ourselves away when we do these things, and we take our stand in the wrong party, concerning which Jesus had some very stern words to say.

'Cleanse Thou our minds from all criticism and condemnation, our speech from insincerity, our eyes from self-seeking, our hands from grasping.

Help me to be sensitive to Thy living touch, to the breathing of Thy Breath within, responding to Thy sweet Influence in and through all my being. O to be alive in the sunshine of Thy Love, with Heaven's blue sky overhead!

O let me step out every moment, from the selfhood stepping free—identifying so my life in Thee—plastic to Thy word in me.

Thou dost call me in my truth. And there will I find Thee, for it is Thy truth in me. No truth have I other than is of Thee. For nought am I apart from Thee. There will I touch Thee, find Thee, know Thee. There am I near to Thee, and Thou to me. How closely near no words can say!

O that I might ever be mine own true self, true to the depths of truth.

Give me a clearer and ever more loving gaze toward Thee; let Thy will, wholly good, be fulfilled in me and through me.

At this moment I renounce all condemnation, and all criticism. I now release all whom I hold in judgment. I bid them go free, 'Go, my brothers, in peace.' It is well with you, and with me. I thought that ye had wronged me. I imagined that I was hurt.

Thou, my God, art beautiful in every one; and I adore Thee, I revere Thee in my brother. Let my spirit be true and loving, and the sweet sanity of love, expressing in kindness and sincerity bless my every contact—knowing that only the good is true.

Where I am foolish, let me be wise; where loveless, may Love break through as a living stream; where doubting, let faith awaken in me, simple and believing; where hasty, let patience enter in; where weak, Thy strength arise in me; where poverty-conscious, let Thy true wealth unfold! Where unbelieving may Thy clear vision overspread, even as the 'Sun of righteousness' arising 'with healing in its wings.'

The beautiful life lived out is heaven revealing.

Gifts of love are gifts of God, and blessed by Him, . . . and He blesses the giver in secret ways.

Love is the coin of God which we are to have in our purses, and to pay out as we journey, seeing to it ever that we give more than we receive.

Get things righted within, and outward matters will gradually adjust.

To every action there is an inner reflex action on the spiritual ground; and this is the manner of our building of the mansion of the soul.

Not in your circumstance but in God is your rich blessing and bounty now and always.

There are two kinds of prosperity: one is what we may term acquired prosperity, which may be ours today, but gone tomorrow; the other is basic prosperity, which has enduring foundations, in a divine economy, and a heavenly integrity.

Without Thee, how empty is life: even one's striving seems unavailing. But in consciousness of Thy presence, the striving passes, something touches us affecting all our being, and the selfhood has no place at all. How different is it then; for the realisation of Thy presence is the incoming of Life itself—with Love infilling, and sympathy and compassion.'

Conventional religion has its place among cults and creeds, but true religion implies the coming of that holy Life into our own.

'There is no salvation other than this: the life of God in the soul.' One might say that the measure of our mysticism, using this word in its true and original sense, is the measure of our realisation of the presence of God. True mysticism is not an escape from time, with its limitations, but an apprehension of the eternal in the midst of time.

Do we imagine ourselves, as it were, a little congeries of body, soul and spirit—three compartments, separate from each other, and divided? But truly there is no division. Three aspects if we like, yet no division, but interblending, and each needful to the other. Beyond the three, there is the oneness that we truly are, which should be as a pervading integrity. In the measure our lives are truly spiritual will this be realised—that 'growth in grace' unto the stature of the children of God. For in them is achieved that shining singleness of purpose implied in the words of Jesus, 'If thine eye be single thy whole being shall be full of light.'

43 Christ is Risen

'JESUS CHRIST is risen today! Hallelujah!' So run the words of old, and so they come echoing down the ages. And a thrill is in those words. But does it begin and end merely as a word of

cheer? Today, while I write these words, it is Easter Day, and all the churches in our land are proclaiming the Easter message, 'Christ is risen, yea, He is risen indeed!' And even so, every Easter day, for nineteen hundred years, these words have been proclaimed. They hold the biggest message that ever has been given to man, but how do we receive it? It is the message of regeneration, but are we regenerate, and is the Church regenerate? 'Christ is risen!' Does the Church raise this word with mighty power? And does it show a Door therein? And do we discern that Door as the very Gate of Heaven?

Or do we miss the meaning? And does the Church miss the meaning? Do we tell of it, or think of it much as an outward piece of news, yet felt to be momentous enough for us to build our hope upon it—a piece of news more or less verified by a few disciples? But if this were all, considering that every human witness is fallible, would it not be rather a slender ground for our hope? No, let us say that the incident at the Tomb itself is but the prelude to something far more wonderful. For its meaning is not, as some have suggested, that of spiritualism, telling us that life does not end with the body's death, but continues beyond. If that were so, His death was not necessary to establish that which can be proved otherwise. We have but to express this to show how we have materialised the divine and heavenly teaching of our Lord. Indeed, if this were all that could be said, surely we would of all men be most miserable. Therefore the meaning rises bigger, grander, diviner far than this.

Truly Christ will be our Ferryman when we cross the waters of death, the death of the body. But that is the least little part of the Easter message. In our thoughts we think in material terms, but the language of Christ is the language of truth, even as it is also the language of love. The overcoming of our Lord is not of the death of the body, but of the death of the soul. And this is that of which the Bible tells. And it is in this respect that the message will search home to us today. This is the very truth of which the Scriptures speak—that death, spiritual death, ensued when man fell away from the knowledge of God. With

sin came death. And sin is just that which separates man from God. We do not truly live until, as it is written, we 'know, and are known of, God', which word implies an interior and heavenly communion. •

Sin is not necessarily a specific act. It is the condition or state of the natural man, who has no thought nor feeling toward God—or, shall we say, toward the spiritual?—but whose whole being is absorbed in the illusory outward life. He is not truly alive, but rather in a sleep-condition. Our Lord came to awaken us out of that sleep. We do not truly live except in so far as the Spirit of God is breathing in us. When we think of these things, what would be the most convincing evidence of our Lord's Resurrection and victory? It would be this: the shifting of the sin-barrier in the lives of His disciples and their inbreathing of the heavenly breath.

And that indeed was just what happened.

The words of the women, eager with their message from the Tomb, had left the disciples incredulous. That was not the sufficing evidence for them, nor is it for us. What would be sufficing would be that which gripped the whole man, body, soul, and spirit. And so it happened, not at the Tomb where the Body of Jesus had been laid, but just where they were gathered together, in that upper room. It was a spiritual experience, utter and complete, and therefore wholly sufficing. And to us, likewise, the great witness is not the witness of history, but that same spiritual experience, just where we are. And as the disciples assembled in that upper room, so may we prepare as we can in that place of prayer, wherein we surrender self unto the *love-life* of God. In themselves a very change of nature took place. It was as the dawning of a Light ineffable; it was as the coming of a new and wonderful Day after a dark, dread night. And it was a stepping out of a world of sin and evil into the world of goodness that Jesus knew. It was a very breathing of new life, in consciousness of the presence of God. They knew: here was no longer mere outward evidence, but pure and spiritual perception. They were born into the deathless life; their lives were Christ-ed. No longer were they disciples,

sitting at the feet of the Master, but apostles, filled with His Spirit, carrying on, in His Name, the divine mission of our Lord, which can never end until the world is won. What was enacted at the Tomb was enacted in them. In that experience inner barriers gave way, as if a great stone, by an angel hand, had been rolled away. And oh, the release, in consciousness, which they felt. They breathed a new and heavenly breath, they saw with new eyes, heard as with a new hearing. They were bathed in the Love divine. No longer 'was God far removed, but greatest, truest, most wonderful Fact of all. And lo, a Presence and a Power, becoming to their quickened consciousness both visible and audible! And they knew: beyond all words they knew! 'Then said Jesus to them, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.'

44 The Heavenly is the Real

THE heavenly is the real substance, and it is central as a nucleus to our every true expression and experience. And so the beautiful life lived out is heaven revealing. Wherever there is beauty, there the light of heaven is shining through.

The heavenly is the true, and it is within ourselves, as Jesus taught. And as Browning tells us, 'Truth is within ourselves, and takes no rise from outward things, whate'er we may believe.' For there is, he adds, 'an inmost centre in us all, where Truth abides in fulness.' The beautiful, the true, such is the reality, not in some far future time, but today if we will but have it so, if we will but believe. 'Only believe,' cried the early apostles, and the very radiance of heaven will come streaming through. We live, indeed, in and through our faith, and the beautiful life is aflame with that heavenly light.

Oh, let us get things righted within, and all our outward circumstances will begin to adjust themselves accordingly.

Faith has a twofold motion or current, establishing a circuit of blessing, One as from the centre within us uprising, and the other from the heavenly love-centre down-streaming. Yet are the two one motion, and neither can be separate from the other, but would be as if it were not there at all. Through faith the earthly is caught into the heavenly and becomes part of it, recovering its true meaning so. Faith is like unto a holy magnetism, and under its influence the earthly particles resolve into beauty, order and symmetry. It is like unto the influence of a magnet held over iron filings. Inert in themselves, they become responsive to that influence, and form together into a perfect pattern. To that degree it is creative. And so it is with faith. It enables the heavenly will and purpose to manifest in the field of our human affairs, and the kingdom of God to reveal. By it the heavenly beautiful comes into expression. And the heavenly beautiful is the word of God spoken from the beginning.

We see the result of human faithlessness in the chaos all around. It is time we began to practice the way of faith. But while faith is creative, and hope calls down blessing, it is Love that works miracles: Love operative between man and man, and someday between nation and nation.

Faith and Love are heavenly presences like unto the cherubim and seraphim. They are the master-craftsmen of the City of God, raising the edifice in beauty and in symmetry; and its replica within the soul.

They whisper of heavenly things, and bring them to pass; and in the light they shed the shadows disappear.

In that light we see life beautiful, as it is meant to be, on earth even as in heaven.

Love is in all and through all. There is no room for evil. Love whispers in our hearts that we are now children of God.

O thou Love-life, come fill my being through! for Thou art my life indeed, and there is truly no life other.

We are Thy children. Touch our hearts to quietness. Let us be open to Thy sweet power gently inflowing. Let us be used, in Thy service.

If we but knew, God's salvation is before us, and the heavenly world right at our doors.

What can we not do to make our ordinary life lovely, with a patient visionary looking through—looking through all things beholdingly?

In the natural light our perception is restricted to the object upon which we look, but in the spiritual light we look through all things, and each experience, beholdingly.

And, as our English poet has written, 'Love looks not with, but through the eyes.'

Help us, more and more, to cultivate the prayer of praise, till our whole day, in every way, be praise to Thee.

Thou dost call me in my truth; for there am I near to Thee, and Thou art closely near to me.

It is sometimes said that Christ's teaching is authenticated by His healing. Rather is it true that Christ's healing is authenticated by His living Word, which is life indeed for you and for me.

'It is a great grace of God,' wrote St. Teresa, 'to practice self-examination; but too much is as bad as too little. Believe me, by God's help, we shall advance more by contemplating the Divine than by keeping our eyes fixed upon ourselves.'

'Love put joys and trials together into the Lover's thoughts, and the joys made complaint of that company and accused Love before the Beloved. But when He had parted them from the sorrows which Love gives to his lovers, behold, they vanished and were gone.' (Ramon Lull).

There is an inner Light, and there is an inner hearing. And, in what a wonderful way, truly seeing, hearing, knowing, loving, Life in its reality is ours to love and to enjoy. According as we think truly, God's universe becomes illumined to our vision. We see our brother with new perception, and glimpse the heavenly there.

45 Winning Through Difficulties

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WE do not live in quiet times, as in days far back, which remembering, or in part remembering, by comparison we may now imagine were such. But were those days really so, in a true sense? Was there an inner peace to match the outward? Or was the appearance misleading? And were we misled by it? Was it not like unto the quiet before a thunderstorm, or the stillness that precedes an earthquake? And was it really as it were a banking up of opposing forces, with brooding menace, each drawing back from the other, with a deadly vacuum between, ready, when the moment came, to break forth, like some demonic power out of control and which must exhaust itself before things could be righted?

On the surface there was peace—of a kind, but beneath the surface was a seething discontent. How different the peace of God! We remember the words of Christ, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you.’ •

When He spoke these words, our Lord was on the point of meeting, and knowingly, the greatest ordeal that ever man passed through. Yet was He enfolded in the peace of God, deep and true and wonderful, as Heaven is deep and true and wonderful. And the power of that Peace was that ‘Love divine, all loves excelling.’

It was the moment of mankind’s greatest crisis, and we may say that Christ stood in the breach and, if we may understand, just there, He laid the foundation stone of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Kingdom of Heaven victorious.

Amid the swirl of the Tempest let us receive and acclaim that word of Peace today: ‘My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth.’ ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ He goes before, and we follow. The heavenly

sign is present, the 'cloud' and the 'fire' overhead as, pressing forward through the wilderness, God's army, His true Israel, with high courage are onward marching unto that Canaan, the land of His kingdom, the place of His promise, where such Goodness awaits that is more than our hearts can conjure, more than we can ask or think.

Far rather than that dead stagnation that once we knew, give me in preference these days, with their vast unrest, even though it be needful that we tread one day at a time, not seeing beyond the immediate present. Yet if this present be true, that is all that matters—our spiritual integrity even as we journey. One thing we ask for is the grace of God, and His presence with us as we journey. 'If Thou art by our side, how can we fear?' There will then be a quiet control of the elements even as they play about us.

How important then that our life be truly centralised! And let us say that in two great words the way has been shown to us. The first is this: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and its rightness, and all things shall be added.' It means that this shall be the primary motive in our every thought and deed. The second word is this, a word which our Lord took up and added to:

'Hear, O Isreal, the Lord thy God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.'

'There must be a perfect stillness in the soul,' wrote Eckhart, 'before God can whisper His word into it, before the light of God can shine through and transform the soul. When our passions are stilled and our worldly desires silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul.'

The heavenly is the true substance. It is germinal to our every true experience. Apart from that there is nothing that could endure. The beautiful life lived out is heaven revealing.

Each experience, as it comes, let us not meet it as from the circumference, but inwardly and faithfully and with a true beholding, whereby it will become tinctured with a very heavenly quality.

‘A gift which does not contain love in it is really no gift at all.’

‘Humility and courtesy are acts of piety.’

‘The wisdom of the ages is often nearer when we stoop than when we soar.’

O Thou art more near to me than I may ever know. Wheresoever I turn, I know that Thou art there. Thou hidest but to draw our spirit on. In all things Thee we seek! Ever art Thou to be sought afresh, and ever to be found anew!

The One divides into the many, and the many unite into the One. The seven tones mingle into harmony, the seven colours into the one pure light. So our seven perceptions journey out to meet Thee, till Thy miracle takes place in us, and they merge into that heavenly *oneness* which is Christ in us. In my spirit I am seeking Thee; but is it not, and always, that Thou art first seeking me?

Those who know Thee not, bring to them vision of Thy Love, so they may understand!

My witness I feel to be so poor. O fill me to overflowing with Thy Love, so that my influence may be one of blessing, and only so. And always it is in *being*, more than, as we think, in *doing*. Give to me a beholding vision, so that the shadows may draw back even as I look, and, in Thy light, that I may perceive Thy presence everywhere.

Each day I go in quest of Thee anew—to find Thee anew, in the common life, and in my brethren—each day ready for what that day may bring; and so that each, in Thy seeing, may be better than before.

46 Our Prayer-life

WHAT, after all, is the prayer-life? One thing it is not: it is certainly not a life spent in continual verbal and mental supplianee. Still less could that be true of 'prayer without ceasing'. The latter is not to be attained without effort, for it represents a state of a pure spiritual consciousness. It could not possibly be more different from that imagined prayer-wheel kind of consciousness emitting pious platitudes without intermission. But, of course, that is not real prayer at all. It could only give God a headache.

Merely to state it shows at once its absurdity. At all points prayer, true prayer relates to life, life true and rich and heavenly and wonderful: life, more life, till it is spelt with capitals, LIFE for you and for me. Our life of prayer is our growth in grace, and it registers our spiritually drawing near and ever nearer to the Heart of God.

I always myself feel that prayer has a very close connection with praise, and I am not at all sure that there is not even an etymological connection between the two words. I like the expression 'praise-prayer'. And I am quite sure that it is not the begging prayer, but the praise-prayer that wins results. For in the one the vital element is missing, whereas it is the very pulse of our prayer of praise. This element is our faith. It is a believing into the goodness of God, expressing in and through all things, and immediate to our experience, as we so make our connection with it.

And thus it is as the song of the soul, a song that becomes a rapture and an ecstasy, as it rises heavenward on wings of love. It was with a praise-prayer on His lips that Jesus performed His works of healing, and in the rapture of the realisation of God's presence, He was able to say, 'It is not I, but the Father in Me, He doeth the works.'

As we advance in true prayer, our heart is increasingly at leisure, and quiet at the centre, making room for everything

else—the experience of life with its full expansions. It does not blur our many contacts, but makes them more sensitively true. Our prayer without ceasing is when the pulse of our heart beats continually toward God, our every heart-beat being directed toward the ‘kingdom of God and its righteousness’.

There is, therefore, no conflict between prayer at that level, a centrally all-absorbing matter, and that truly rounded experience we desire in our outward life, which would be prevented by an overstress at one point, however good that point may be. But true prayer is no preventive, but rather an aidance to the full life in its richest meaning. It is a central matter, and by it we are ever plumbing life to a deeper level, with a releasing effect, inducing a greater ease and leisure in our normal experience, enabling us to fulfil the same more perfectly and richly. It will not be time absorbing so much as time enriching.

Amid all things prayer arises centrally as a fragrant incense from grateful human hearts. Our duty and service is maintained and sweetened by such prayer. It will give poise and balance to the thing that we do. Therefore, ‘in everything by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God.’

If we consider the myriad needs of life, and of the world around us, the innumerable claims for special prayer, how can we so pray, but just by channelling the Love of God? And again, how may we abide in a present communion with God, if our thoughts are busied continually formulating petitions for others—for missionaries in the far field, for instance, and all the calls, innumerable, of which there is no end. And of true prayer for one another, we can never have enough of it. The answer is, I think, the central giving of ourselves in that praise-prayer to God, enabling the out-pouring of a very heavenly blessing made possible through Love’s channelling, knowing that where Love is present, God is present, too!

‘The healer in Christ,’ wrote Brother James, ‘has come to where the soul ceases from all effort of self-will.’

Open mine eyes that I may see—Thee; open mine ears that I may hear—Thy voice; open my heart, so I be responsive to Thy truth, and so receptive to Thy Love that I, too, may be loving in all my ways.

Enable that simple openness in me that Love be present in all my ways.

Let me stand free from the slavery of books, of mental reasoning, and intellectualism, so I may enter into the Open, with immediate perception and that swift, simple direct understanding, which is the gift of Love itself!

Let not my spirit be bound to the changing world. Amid the swiftly passing moments, our manifold and varied experiences, let me ever find Thee, who changest not.

O may I ever feel the breath of Thy Spirit, and indwell in Thy presence. True and loving then will my witness be and my service be made perfect.

Let each action, each thought of mine, in its joy, its love, its truth, be sacramental, an act of worship to Thee.

‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.’

47 A Divine Simplicity

OH, that the fragrance of a divine simplicity might touch our souls, every one, bringing heaven very near, attuning our hearts to kindness, one toward another. Then something very wonderful would surely come about, and the Sun of righteousness arise in our midst, with healing in his wings; for its radiance is the radiance of love. And truth will be in our human speech, and in our dealings one with another. And angel-music will be felt and heard amid our common intercourse as we meet and mingle together. For Love is

present; and, not merely altruistically, but from our hearts, we will care for one another. And a Great Peace will dawn, the Peace of God upon the souls of men. And war shall be no more.

From all criticism and condemnation, free Thou our minds and our hearts; our speech from insincerity, our eyes from self-seeking, our hands from grasping.

When foolish we tend to be in these ways, let us be wise; where loveless, may that Love pour forth as a living stream; when doubt fills our hearts, let us remember where we truly stand, and recover our vision anew; when we are hasty in our judging, let us remember that Love is patient and kind, and thinketh no evil. When I condemn my brother I condemn myself.

At this moment, and in His Name, I renounce all condemnation; and I refuse to judge my brother who stands before me. I bid you, my brother, go free. I thought you had wronged me. Even so, is it not our privilege to forgive? Go, my brother, in peace. Henceforth it is well with you, and with me.

Truly, as we forgive so shall we be forgiven, and in the action of forgiveness we step into heaven itself.

Forgiveness opens wide the door—when we cease to condemn, or judge, or criticise. Light shines, a heavenly light of realisation. And we become aware in our deepest selves that the real and spiritual world is shining through and interpenetrating the other world in which we dwell.

Forgiveness opens wide the door; the door of friendship, true friendship, which also is the friendship of Christ, for Christ is present in it. At the heart of it, there is love, His love.

Give me a clearer and ever more loving gaze toward Thee, that I may behold into Thy truth!

‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not,’ said the patriarch of old, awakening out of his misery. And he beheld a ladder reaching unto heaven, and angels of God ascending and descending upon it. And with a great awe he

felt the nearness of the Divine Presence, and that he was standing at the very gates of heaven.

That God, His presence, is very near is what all true scripture declares; the trouble is that we, speaking generally, are not very near to God, but sometimes, even very far away indeed from Him. Yet have we this word: 'Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you.' And indeed does not that follow from His immediacy at all times?

God is very near; as much *now* as at any other time; and where God is, there is heaven, too! Then shall we not open our hearts to Him, those inner gates of loving trust and simple faith, and let the 'King of glory enter in'?

If God's place is *HERE*, and very present, and if God's time is *NOW*, than am I now in my true place, even where I stand, looking towards Thee beholdingly, and Heaven is very near. Peace breathes; Love enfolds me; Joy in my heart sings.

Oh, may we ever be aware of Thy presence, and awake to Thy Goodness and, if we may so understand, surrender our separateness into Thy Wholeness.

Oh, may there every day be an opening out in my experience, and that which I participate in become a sacrament of love; and every way I take prove an open way to Thee!

I need Thee as a child its Mother. Hold Thou this hand of mine; keep Thou my heart in Thine. That which is erring in me, do Thou translate into that which is good.

O thou holy passion, O thou Christ Compassion, sweep through all my being, that I, too, may be love and compassion, even as Thou art Love and Compassion!

That I walk in perfect love is enough. I have not to forecast or worry about the future, but to dwell in the Present, knowing that the *PRESENT* is always Thy appointed time.

At first we see life merely in relation to ourselves. And this has its part in our growth and development. Then something happens which some would call a spiritual initiation. and we

begin to see things differently. No longer do we regard ourselves as central in that old way, but now realise that we are part of, or rather belong to, a grander Scheme, demanding of us a deeper loyalty which, more central in our own life² is also truly central to every other life as well. The orbit of our life is now, beyond comparison, more ample than before. And truly it is in us a richer, deeper consciousness; our own, yet more than our own. For the Greater Life—the true and heavenly life—is now expressing in us and through us, our real Self indeed. For Christ has entered in, with the answer and meaning!

48 God my Refuge

WHEN reading one of the Psalms—it was the wonderful 46th, which truly is a psalm of faith, rising to a very rapture of praise to the Most High—my thought and attention, my heart's attention, too, were held by a verse which I came to, prefacing a little passage, which lit up for me with a very searching and illumining meaning for today, implying that when the stormy petrel is out, that is the time for us to go forward in faith.

How frequently as we read the Scripture in the true way—that is, devotedly, seeking God in our heart, as well as with our mind—we come upon great words and passages encouraging to our faith, and which, as we feed upon them, establish in us a quiet, happy, confident assurance and realisation of Divine protection amid the flux of things, that is, amid the stress and the tempest. As, for instance, this: 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only, makest me to dwell in safety.' And this: 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people.'

And this: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'

But on our part, of course, it depends upon *our* trust and *our* truth.

Psalm 46 is like the sound of a trumpet, commencing with the triumphant peal: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,' and with this refrain running through: 'The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' It counsels us to be at ease amid the hurly-burly of the elements. What we need today is the sure confidence which springs from a living faith. Through faith we know there is solid ground beneath our feet.

'Therefore we will not fear', is the theme of this great psalm. For that God is our present help, 'therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried (or swept) into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.'

There is a river, the streams whereof^f shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved (shaken): God shall help her, and that right early (with instant protection).

What a source of inner joy it is to hold a quiet confidence in the loving providence of God enfolding and encompassing us in all our ways! But it is when storms are about, that faith comes to its own, and blows such a trumpet-note as in this psalm. For then, in that sure knowledge, which is realisation, our faith will become an exaltation, an inner rapture.

There is a River, we read in the Apocalypse, 'flowing from the Throne of God,' and it is that same river of which the psalmist writes: and it is ever to be found near to where God's children are, enfolding and protecting them, and bringing of His goodness to their doors.

And, concerning that city of God, it is spiritually the true and abiding centre in us all—that which is real and basic in our experience, lending meaning to all else. As we dwell therein, and our feet tread on that sacred ground, we know that we stand secure. Yes, when the storms are about, then is the time for the triumph of faith. When you come up against the impossible, and know not where to turn; when you have done your best, your level best, and can do no more, at such a moment do not be anxious but believing, and ‘lift up your eyes’, and give praise, for know of a very surety that ‘your redemption draweth nigh’! There is no such word as ‘impossible’ in the dictionary of Love.

When we can face the ‘impossible’ with quiet eyes, believingly, at that moment our feet are on the threshold of a great salvation. Having done all we can, and can do no more, and our self-effort ceaseth, then God’s action is in motion on our behalf. And then does God restore, not merely what has been, but better than what has been.

O that the mist that is about us might lift, that we might see clearly, and behold into Truth itself. And O that we might so achieve a perfect correspondence with the Unseen. And that we might know the Love of God, in a pure realisation above and beyond all thought.

O Love of God, breathe in us Thy spirit of tender Compassion, so that our love become Thy Love, flowing out in blessing unto all whom we contact. Be Thou our motive in our every action!

Do we go forth clad in weakness? By Thy Spirit enable us to come back girded with strength. Cleanse us from all false and foolish thinking and misunderstanding. And do Thou abide in us, and we in Thee, with our feet on heavenly ground. In the poverty of self we take our way, but Thou wilt clothe us in the garment of Love.

O Life, made mine indeed, come fill my being through!
How poor and miserable apart from Thee, but with Thee,
in Thee, O joy, life, love, goodness, inexhaustible!

49 As a Little Child

JESUS said, 'Except ye become as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven,' the land of Promise. And in that word 'little child,' He apparently meant the little babe in its mother's arms. In the babe is exemplified a faith in its mother so absolute that there is no question about it at all. If we had faith like that of a little child, how different things would be. If we had that simple perceiving, that direct manner of looking into things, that pure beholding of a little child—what a heavenly joy would be ours! We would find that we were even now treading on heavenly ground.

For heaven, as Jesus taught, is not far away; it is even now within you and all around? The blessed Realm, God's Kingdom, is right at hand; the divine Reality is for us to discover, here and now—not tomorrow, but today. We have but to look, and to look truly—and to look truly is to look believably.

Our look of faith is our look into truth—into the Reality; and the fashion of that Reality is the fashion of the Realm or kingdom of God. Our faith is the light in which we truly see; and the clearer and clearer that light becomes, so does God's kingdom draw near and nearer and ever nearer, until we realise it to be just where we are, and even underneath our feet. It is near as God is near, and truly, if we but knew, God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. For where God is, there His kingdom is.

This is at first an individual experience, but later, at God's moment, it will become a social experience. In the end will the great prophecy be fulfilled, when the cloud of evil under which cruelty thrives will disappear, as the knowledge of God spreads wide and far, till it 'cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'

Lead us, Thou, into an ever clearer vision and consciousness of Thy presence, so we may realise the deeper life of the Spirit becoming manifest each day, and every

moment of the day. Let body, mind, and spirit interblend in harmony with Thee, becoming a vessel to Thy use, an instrument, sensitive and responsive in obedience to Thy word.

How hard to rise above the self-bound thought! How great the striving till Thou enterest in—and then, oh the release of it. In the great Harmony, which is the Life Divine, in all, through all, and over all, there is no room for self.

Life most real, mine own true life, arise, ascend in me! In Thy radiance come forth, and in Thy beauty be manifest! O Love, grow daily, Thou, in me, till I in Thee, and Thou in me, art one.

O let us be open and receptive to Thy Spirit that maketh all things beautiful!

Nothing am I apart from Thee: separate from Thee, my life is but a fiction. Thou art my whole good, my truth—my life fulfilling. Teach me my need of Thee, Who art my health, my strength, my joy, and my very life itself.

Thou art to be found in our supreme attention to the moment's duty.

Unto those ones whom it is difficult naturally to love, help us to convey Thy richest, sweetest gift, even of Love itself. Enable us to render truest service unto each, gladly and eagerly, swift to recognise that which is possible, in the right way, at the right moment, towards each, toward all!

Be Thou our close companion as we journey, lest in a moment we forget, and react to others falsely, instead of touching the salving chord of friendship, of kindness and of compassion.

How may we express Thee? Ah, it is not in what we do, but in what we are. To be oneself truly, and to let Love shine through, that is how to allow goodness to express.

If we would truly *be*, then first must we cease to *be*! The selfhood 'with its me and mine and the like' must die, if the Self, the heavenly self in us, would *be* free!

The trouble of the present age
Is not that it is deep in crime,
But that its spirit doth engage
In idle shadows all the time!

'Eternity,' wrote Rufus Jones, 'is just the real world for which we were made, and which we enter through the door of love.' And St. Augustine wrote that 'one loving spirit sets another on fire.'

'Your way of life, not owning anything, seems to me very harsh and difficult,' said the Bishop of Assisi to St. Francis. 'My Lord,' Francis answered, 'if we possessed property, we would need weapons for its defence; it is the origin of all quarrels and lawsuits. The holding of wealth has proved in so many ways an obstacle to the love of God and of one's neighbour that, for these reasons, we do not desire temporal goods.'

'Blessed is he who loves Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thy sake,' wrote St. Augustine.

50 Our Beholding Vision

*He who seeks the kingdom of God will welcome its
upward climb.*

LET us take life acceptingly, with a beholding vision, looking believingly and discerningly till its heavenly outlines appear. For there is a divine reality against the unreality of appearances. Our faith will yield increasing evidence of that other World which, with our outer perception, we cannot see, yet which is nearer, and how much nearer! than we know.

About us is that heavenly world, more than we know; and we are in it truly. Our quickening faith is the beginning of our awareness of it. Do we think it is too good to be true? 'Only believe!' cried the early apostles: only believe, and test

it out; and then you will make the discovery, and know, whether it be so, from your own experience. God responds to our response. The Spirit awaits our readiness to enter our lives, and achieve God's miracle of grace therein. It is that we may have *life*, and life more abundantly. Through faith we open and yield ourselves to the divine integrating power. And first of all it is a quickening and release at the centre, an awakening of the hidden spiritual nature that is in us.

Believing into God and Goodness, let us yield ourselves in our experience to the surgical operation of His Spirit, releasing our life at its centre, and reassembling and quickening the elements of our nature, according to the heavenly motion of the Real Life within.

The evidence of Christian truth is not in miracle: the scripture cautions us as to that. It is in the quickening and unfolding of our spiritual life. The miraculous is only permissible under the law of compassion. If it were to take first place in our esteem, instead of second place, it would tend to evil. For it would inflate the human ego. And instantly the spiritual realm would be short-circuited and closed to us. It is on the ground of the humility of Christ, and no other, that the divine miracles take place.

Yet each one of us is fashioned and destined to be a living centre of divine love.

Not of myself, said Jesus: 'it is the Father in me that doeth the works.' O let us lift up and exalt Christ in our service, in Whom is the life and the power and the glory. Christ is the radiance of the love of God in us.

'Let us in our message offer that which is beyond all creeds,—the evidence in our lives of communion with the Spirit of God.'

(*J. W. Rowntree*).

'In the mighty power of God, go on, preaching the Gospel to every creature, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,' cried George Fox. 'In the name of Christ preach the mighty day of the Lord to all the consciences of them who have long lain in darkness . . . In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ go on, that that of God in all consciences may witness

that ye are sent of God and are of God, and so according to that speak.'

'We ceased from the teachings of all men,' wrote Edward Burroughs, 'and from their words and their worships, and their temples, and all their baptisms and churches, and we ceased from our own words and professions and practices in religion . . . We met together often, and waited upon the Lord in pure silence from our own words, and hearkened to the voice of the Lord and felt His word in our hearts.'

Such was the testimony of the early Quakers, concerning whom Rufus Jones writes that though 'they may have failed in their intellectual formulation, at least they succeeded in finding a living God, warm and tender and near at hand, the Life of their lives, the Day Star in their hearts; and their travail of soul, their brave endurance, and their loyal obedience to vision have helped to make our modern world.'

Oh, we need a recovery of that heavenly awareness, a realisation of the immediacy of the presence of God.

O Love, grow daily, thou, in me: the warmth of thy presence be afire in me. Let this life of mine be instrument to thee, in thy dear service. Help me to give as thou dost give, and serve as thou wouldst serve. I would impart of the treasure of the heaven in my heart unto all whom I meet.

In Thee I find freedom, and it is released in me in ways of truth and love.

Thou art the release of love in us, even in body and in mind. Thou wouldst have us wholly emancipate, as befits the children of God.

The real life in me is Thy presence in me: apart from Thee I am nothing. Thou art beauty, and truth, and love in me. Oh that this life of mine might be as a *hand* to Thee, and as *feet* to Thy service.

If I would *be*, then first must I cease to be. The selfhood in me, with its *me* and *mine*, must die, if my true Self, which is Thy life in me, would be free, as it is meant to be.

How may I express Thee? It is not in what I try to do, but rather in what I *am*. To be oneself *truly*, and let Love shine through, that is it. Just to be oneself, and allow *goodness* to express!

Open thou the door for me, and let my true circumstance unfold, sweeter, truer, richer, kinder than heretofore. And in it let Thy footsteps be!

The Spirit of Christ is not in that superior attitude that sits back in a chair, satisfied in a mental conception that there is no evil. For there is no true denial of evil, except followed up by action that proves it. It is in Love and Compassion which alone has power to over-master the evil, bringing its own true nature to shine in those dark places wherein souls are prisoned.

51 The Three Questions

THE journey of life is often expressed, and how truly, as man's quest for Truth. For Truth itself is our final satisfaction. If it were not so, then all things would fail; but if it is, even as we believe, then must it bring with it all else that is worth-while. And what is most worth-while are the gifts of God to man: goodness, purity, love. When we think of these three, we couple them with another three of which St. Paul writes: faith, hope, love. It is as a ladder reaching to heaven. When there is goodness, when there is purity, then it is that the beauty of love unveils, and her sweetness is felt and known. It is man's heavenly realisation: therefore, when it touches the human heart, at that instant there is heavenly experience.

'There is nothing higher than Truth,' one wrote, therefore, it has been wisely said, with deepest meaning, that 'God is Truth.' Thus it is the goal of man's seeking. Such questions as 'where am I?' 'what am I?' 'why am I?' arise in every thoughtful mind. They knock at the door of the soul with insistency

The three, however, are but one great question expressed in different ways, for the answer to the one is the answer to each.

That comprehensive question is 'what is man?' It is the old legendary riddle of the Sphinx. In the market-place of Thebes (shall we call it the city of the soul? or of man's self-consciousness?) the inscrutable questioner propounds the eternal question. The answer that we give determines our destiny. For it will challenge every thought, every emotion passing through. But with every answer except the true *ðæ*, our ways will fail one by one. And so it will be until One enters at length who will bring the sufficing answer, and thus end the evil. It is with this purpose that I have come, said our Lord, that I might destroy the works of darkness.

But in the soul a deeper and more poignant question arises than 'who am I?' It is indeed a time of pause, and a wrestling and an agonising and a questioning. It is no longer merely 'what am I?' but 'am I?' 'What then is our identity?' The little plant has its protective sheathing; yet each little covering is thrown aside before the flower appears. The soul, too, has its sheathing, to be dismissed continually even as the inner life unfolds. Our ideal journeys onward; it is not stationary. Our every step onwards reveals a further vista of truth. And with it a deeper questing of identity. Can we fix it? Or is all illusion? Phantoms in our own shape and form appear before us, but at the testing they dissolve away. Each affirms its reality as our true self, but hastily departs on its rejection by the soul. 'You are not I, not you, nor you!' 'You seem to be, yet come close that I may discern; but no, no, you are not!' One self-illusion after another fades and dies. Then what am I? 'What am I beyond these passing thoughts, feelings, fancies, imaginations?'

One by one the illusions fade and depart; yet with each passing the soul is more calm and tranquil. The waters become more lucent, more clear. At length, as it were from the deeps within, an emotion is felt, and a Voice speaks, and the soul is stilled in wonder and in adoration. And out of that wonder and adoration there is ecstasy as that of a river entering the great waters: not losing itself, but only the bounds through which it

flowed; becoming one with That to which it had ever belonged. And at length to the question, 'am I?' of the wrestling soul, like unto a very day-dawn breaking in splendour through the darkness, there comes a thrilling answer breathing from within as from Heaven, 'I am!'—and everywhere are beating angel-wings! The soul bends low as St. Francis bent low, with the prayer of self-surrender of love and adoration, these words repeating, 'My God and my all.'

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52 The New Year Dawns for Us

THE Old Year, as I write, is ending—not very many more days to go as they are going, and quicker and quicker. One of our problems is to try to overtake time. In these days time seems to be shrinking; or is it that we are growing older? For at the end of the day so little seems to be done. Yet perhaps we are too anxious to get things done, always looking to the end of what we are doing; whereas what is important is a *presentness* of consciousness in the doing of them—and in the action thus practising the presence of God. For to get near and nearer to the Presence of God, in the immediacy of the present in which we dwell, that is the important thing, yes, always and always!

The moment will come, we read, one day when time will wind itself up, as a scroll. Perhaps Time, too, is journeying to Bethlehem, there to stay its pace and be still, find the Eternal Moment there, and lose itself in worship. So journeying, even as we, children of time, are journeying there, even to Bethlehem. The paths we tread, so diverse one from another, as they are paved with sincerity, in the end they all lead to Bethlehem! And there awaits a heavenly initiation, and we journey forth, no longer children of time, but children of eternity.

As we tread the ways of life, we have henceforward the magic of the eternal Moment to bless us in all we are doing.

The greatest Fact of life is God—at all times, and in every place—God, regnant in His universe! Therefore, should we not, and all people everywhere—and would it not be so if we knew all?—give glory to God in the Highest, with hallelujahs on our lips, joining so in the universal Hymn of Praise!

The days hurry by, and now are we at the last moment of the Old Year, which is on its knees, laying what it has garnered, on the altar. And with that strange offering, contrite, we have *our* share. An instant pause there is 'twixt old and new, a pause for us expanding inwardly, enabling the utterance of our deepest thought, our faithful look into the days that are to be, calling for the highest that we can give. And now the hour strikes, and the bells peal out, welcoming the New Year! But what has it in store? Let us remember that all things may be made different, according to our attitude. All things may be made better as we face them truly. The worst may become the best, in the magic of the Love of God, and the 'base lead' be transmuted into pure gold.

As the hour strikes, the word *Finis* is written, ending the volume of the Old Year, and a new volume opens before us, its pages as yet unwritten. Let us kneel down; let us consecrate the pages beforehand inasmuch as we may share in the same; let us dedicate ourselves in our share of the writing therein—that it all may be unto the enhancement of His kingdom and the coming of the Love of God into the hearts of men. Let us surrender the old, and the old *that is in us*, in its black and white, into God's hands, that in the mystery of His Love, He may bless it in retrospect, and, as in the words of the old prophet, retrieve the days that the 'locust hath eaten'.

Let us surrender the old into God's hands completely, that we may commence afresh and anew. And we pray that He will not allow the past to infringe upon the present. And that will surely be avoided as we abide and as we journey in the practice of God's presence. But lo, the bells are ringing, happy bells, joyous bells; bells that in their sounding are telling of His Coming—Christ—Immanuel, God with us, even now, as we

are writing the first words, and as we begin to turn the pages!
But hark to the bells, speaking to us!

'Ring out the old, ring in the new!'

In the wonderful Apocalypse of St. John, two books are mentioned. One is the Book that records man's separation from God, and the other is the Book of Life, or of man's unity with God. And we may write on the pages that are before us according to the one or according to the other. Yet it is true that the Book of Life opens for us the moment we give our hearts to God. And the writing of that Book in its heavenly script is the revealing of the kingdom of God in the lives of men. And as we follow in the footsteps of the One Who prepared the path for us, so do the pages open with their heavenly foreseeing; and we behold the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, descending from Heaven. Therefore, insofar as we are concerned let our writing of the pages of the new volume be inspired by that faithful look into life, with a true beholding vision, even of God's kingdom descending. Let it be prayerful, faithful, visionary and believing. Let us consecrate it unto the highest, and so let us in all that we are doing be serving in His Temple. And all that we transact, in the little, and in the greater, let it be sacramental!

May the New Year, more than any before, be one of Love in action, with, moment by moment, the forgiveness of Christ pouring through our hearts. And that we may all—indeed all who are of good will—be drawn closer to one another in deepening fellowship—that fellowship which brings heaven into our midst. And may the New Year be made beautiful for all of us by the joining together of many broken threads—the healing of old estrangements with new understanding—and the finding of wonderful new friendships, as day by day we journey in the land of the Kingdom—that good land which is under our feet as we abide in the near and loving consciousness of His Presence.

And, facing the new days, let us lift up our eyes, and go forward in simple childlike believing trust in the Goodness of

God, and in the power of His wisdom and might—knowing of
a surety that

In heavenly peace,
Hand joined in hand,
Belting the round world
God's children stand.

